

Nietzsches Staat: Reading *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*  
as a Reading of Plato's *Republic*

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department  
of English and Comparative Literature.

Chapel Hill  
2007

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## Abstract

WILLIAM O. TAYLOR: Nietzsches Staat: Reading *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* as a Reading of Plato's *Republic*  
(Under the direction of Eric Downing)

Nietzsche's five lectures titled *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* given in 1872 show similarities of form and content to Plato's *Republic*. They are written as a continuous dialog between an aged philosopher and a group of younger interlocutors. They also argue for the necessity of a caste system, an educational system centered on a rigorous ascent through disciplines until one achieves communion with the metaphysical absolute, and other elements found in the *Republic*. This comparison of the lectures to the *Republic* examines the early Nietzsche's relation to Plato's theory of education and his metaphysics in order to draw out Nietzsche's dependence on and variance with Platonism and to understand what value he places on the study of the Greeks. In the course of the comparison Nietzsche's ambivalent relationships to German classicism, philological historicism, German nationalism, and German philosophy are also discussed.

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## Abbreviations

### I. GERMAN EDITIONS

KGW *Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke*

KSA *Kritische Studienausgabe. Sämtliche Werke*

See Works Cited for further details and for conventions used in citations.

### II. ESSAYS AND LECTURES

EP *Encyclopaedie der klassischen Philologie* [Encyclopedia of Classical Philology] (1871) KGW, 2.3:341-437

GZ *Gedanken über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* [Thoughts on the Future of our Educational Institutions] (1872) KSA, I:761-3

GS *Der griechische Staat* [The Greek State] (1872) KSA, I:764-77

HP *Homer und die klassische Philologie* [Homer and Classical Philology] (1869) KGW, 2.I:248-69

HW *Homer's Wettkampf* [Homer's Contest] (1872) KSA, I:783-92

NN *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* [On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life] (1873) KSA, I:241-334 (trans. R.J. Hollingdale in Nietzsche, ed. Daniel Breazeale 1999, 57-123)

PW *Ueber das Pathos der Wahrheit* [On the Pathos of Truth] (1872) KSA, I:755-60

SP *Das Verhältniß der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie zu einer deutschen Cultur* [The Relation of the Schopenhauerian Philosophy to a German Culture] (1872) KSA, I:778-782

ZB *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* [On the Future of our Educational Institutions] (1872) KSA, I:643-752

WL *Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* [On Truth and Lie in a Non-Moral Sense] (1873) KSA, I:875-90 (trans. Ronald Speirs, in Nietzsche, ed. Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs 2000, 139-153)

### III. WORKS

GD *Götzen-Dämmerung* [Twilight of the Idols] (1888) KSA, VI:55-161

GT *Die Geburt der Tragödie* [The Birth of Tragedy] (1872) *KSA*, I:23-156 (trans. Ronald Speirs, in Nietzsche, ed. Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs 2000, 13-116)

VS *Versuch einer Selbstkritik* [“An Attempt at Self-Criticism“ (second preface to GT)] (1886) *KSA*, I:11-22 (trans. Ronald Speirs, in Nietzsche, ed. Raymond Guess and Ronald Speirs 2000, 3-12)

Note on translations: All translations from the German and Greek are mine except for those for GT, NN, VS and WL.

## INTRODUCTION

Christmas Eve 1872 is the 35<sup>th</sup> birthday of Franz Liszt's daughter, Cosima Wagner. Friedrich Nietzsche, her husband's friend and admirer, gives her a small book titled *Fünf Vorreden zu fünf ungeschriebenen Büchern*.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of that year, Nietzsche had published *Die Geburt der Tragödie* [*The Birth of Tragedy*]. This book of five prefaces given as a gift presents some of his continued work on the Greeks. One preface, titled *Der griechische Staat*, explores Nietzsche's theories of how the Greeks utilize slavery to produce what is deemed to be their peerless culture. It also presents his idea that the state is the necessary means of achieving aesthetic redemption for the Greeks as a people through the appearance of Genius.<sup>2</sup>

With this in mind, he writes, „Der v o l l k o m m e S t a t P l a t o ' s i s t [...] gewiß noch etwas Größeres als selbst die Warmblütigen unter seinen Verehren glauben.“ Nietzsche also thinks that, for this reason, his academic colleagues dismiss „eine solche Frucht des Alterthums“ naively and mistakenly. He believes that Plato achieves a „mit

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<sup>1</sup> *Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books*.

<sup>2</sup> “The Greek State.” The other prefaces are: *Ueber das Pathos der Wahrheit* [“On the Pathos of Truth”], *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* [“On the Future of our Educational Institutions”], *Über das Verhältnis der Schopenhauerischen Philosophie zu einer deutschen Cultur* [“On the Relation of Schopenhauerian Philosophy to a German Culture”], and *Homer's Wettkampf* [“Homer's Contest”].

Derbheit hingemalt“ presentation in his *Republic* through „eine dichterische Intuition“ of how the state must act as the means of the „immer erneuerte Zeugung und Vorbereitung des Genius.“<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche goes on to explain how Plato saw through the destroyed „Herme des damaligen Staatslebens“ of his time and perceived „etwas Göttliches in ihrem Inneren.“ Nietzsche thinks that Plato „g l a u b t e daran, daß man dies Götterbild herausnehmen könne,“ and that Plato had attempted this in the *Republic*.<sup>4</sup>

He critiques Plato's description of the ideal state in saying that Plato did not place the Genius in its general conception over his state „sondern nur den Genius der Weisheit und des Wissens.“ Nietzsche's also critiques the fact that Plato „die genialen Künstler aber überhaupt aus seinem Staate ausschloß,“ explaining that this was only „eine starre Consquenz des sokratischen Urtheils über die Kunst,“ which Plato had adopted against his own judgment. He calls Plato's rejection of art only a „mehr äußerliche und beinahe zufällige Lücke,“ which he hopes will not prevent anyone from recognizing „in der Gesamtkonzeption des platonischen Staates die wunderbar große Hieroglyphe einer tiefsinnigen und ewig zu deutenden G e h e i m l e h r e v o m Z u s a m m e n h a n g z w i s c h e n S t a a t u n d G e n i u s.“ Nietzsche then makes clear that what „wir von dieser Geheimschrift zu errathen meinten, haben wir in dieser Vorrede gesagt.“<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “*Plato's perfect state* is surely something greater still than even the warm-blooded among his admirers believe ... such a fruit of antiquity.... roughly painted.... a poetic intuition.... eternally renewed procreation and preparation of Genius.” GS 776.

<sup>4</sup> “herms of the state-life at the time.... something divine in the interior.... *believed* that one could abstract this divine image.” GS 776.

<sup>5</sup> “rather only the Genius of wisdom and of knowledge ... barred the ingenious artists entirely from his state ... a rigid consequence of the Socratic judgment of art .... more external and nearly coincidental gap ... “in the total conception of the Platonic state the wonderfully grand hieroglyph of a profound and eternally to be interpreted *secret doctrine of the coherence between state and Genius* ... we meant to guess from this cryptograph we have already said in this preface.” GS 776-777.



*Der griechische Staat* is only a dozen or so pages long. How could such a short work provide a sufficient interpretation of what Plato intended to say in the *Republic*? Though it adds some interesting ideas to Plato's discussion, it does not present all of Nietzsche's ideas of how Plato's "roughly painted" exploration of the state should have been written. Earlier that year on January 16<sup>th</sup>, exactly two weeks after *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was published, Nietzsche began presenting a series of five lectures at the university at Basel on how German education should be reformed. The lectures are titled *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*.<sup>6</sup> Though he never mentions the *Republic* in any of those lectures (he does mention the *Phaedrus* very briefly), he gives a much fuller explication of how he believes the state needs to form its educational institutions to achieve the goal at which he believes Plato's *Republic* is aimed. These five lectures, in fact, present a discussion which is very similar in many aspects to Plato's. This paper will argue that the *Republic* serves, in many ways as the model for the material of the lectures. Some interesting similarities are probably unintended. Others more than likely do have their origin, whether consciously or not, in the *Republic*.

The German education, or *Bildung*, Nietzsche is discussing is a far richer concept than the simple idea of an institutional process imparting knowledge to students.<sup>7</sup>

Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* was one of the founding works within the genre of

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<sup>6</sup> *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*

<sup>7</sup> As the German word *Bildung* can not be translated in this paper without losing relevant aspects of its semantic range, it will, in most instances, remain untranslated. Though it is too rich and complex to be adequately discussed in a note, a couple of its meanings will be given. It does mean "education" as both a process one undergoes and as something that is acquired thereby. A literal translation of it can also indicate the form that something has and the process of formation. *Bildung*, then, not only refers to the knowledge one has gained, but also the kind of person into which one has been formed and the process of formation one has undergone. *Bildung* can also be translated as "culture," referring to a collective state achieved by the process. Thus, Nietzsche's discussion of *Bildung* is not only about education, but also about the molding of individuals into beings capable of a true, artistic culture, and it locates itself within multiple discourses important to his audience.

the *Bildungsroman* which charts out the emotional, moral, social and intellectual development of a character from youth into adulthood. These novels explore how someone becomes who they are. The German educational system was reshaped by early 19<sup>th</sup> century reformers, Wilhelm von Humboldt foremost among them, influenced in part by the idea of *Bildung* found in literature. The new *Bildung* was based on an education in the classics. Over half a century later, Nietzsche believes that the system is not forming graduates who can achieve the culture he thinks is possible. It is this unrealized culture that he hopes will produce art capable of aesthetically redeeming the German people.

Due to an unusually glowing recommendation from his professor, F.W. Ritschl, whom he had followed from Bonn to Leipzig and under whom he had switched from theology to philology, Nietzsche was in his third year as an associate professor of philology at Basel. The year before, Prussia had defeated France and unified a great number of the German-speaking states into the *Deutsches Reich*. The universities at Bonn and Leipzig as well as the one founded by Humboldt in Berlin were now all universities of this *Reich*. The Swiss university at Basel was not only just outside the boundary of the German *Reich*, it was in many ways on the edge of the German academic scene founded by von Humboldt.

Nietzsche's discussion of German *Bildung* does not consist of a set of gentle suggestions meant to guide a good system in need of correction. It contains withering criticisms of a system he believes needs to be removed and replaced entirely. It also criticizes, though in much more circumspect tones, the German *Reich* and its relationship to the German academy. The rhetorical barbs he is shooting from across the border are probably as powerful a force in determining the form of the lectures as is their Platonic

content. The five lectures present the recounting of a fictitious dialog, to which Nietzsche claims to have been a party when he was a young student. The characters of the dialog are a younger Nietzsche, a fellow student of his, a cantankerous old philosopher, and a younger man who accompanies the philosopher.

Unlike Socrates in Plato's works, Nietzsche's philosopher is not presented as insecure in his wisdom. Though Plato's Socrates is sometimes presented as a trustworthy authority, he often appears to be at a loss or as in need of correction as any other character. This invites the reader to actively participate in the development of ideas within the dialog, though it can make it difficult to determine to what extent a statement in Plato's dialogs represents his own views. Nietzsche's philosopher is presented as an authority who never doubts or questions himself and whose interlocutors never provide any opposition that can be taken seriously. The reader is only ever caused to question in sympathy with the poor interlocutors and always receives the definitive answers in the philosopher's replies.

The philosopher's confident, venomous and unfettered expression of his contempt for modern *Bildung* and for modernity in general is all too reminiscent of the rhetoric of the later Nietzsche, who had ceased to care so much about what could be at stake. His philosopher says the things the young Nietzsche would like to say but from which he, still looking forward to the illustrious career promised by Ritschl, must distance himself in lectures delivered to colleagues. Within the dialog, Nietzsche presents his younger self as well-meaning and idealistic though misguided and in need of correction. In retelling the story, Nietzsche the narrator can assume the pose of one sympathizing with his audience as they recognize the painful truth for which not he, but another, is responsible.

The virulence of Nietzsche's attacks reveals the desperation of his need to believe in something in the face of post-Enlightenment nihilism. Through his study of German philosophy and the Greeks, Nietzsche has formulated a notion of redemption that could give meaning to his existence, as will be examined throughout the paper. As Nietzsche formulates it at the time of these lectures, this redemption requires the cooperation of the state and of its collective educational institutions. Nietzsche attacks them to provoke them into joining the only endeavor that he thinks could give life meaning. His optimism about social institutions, his nationalism, and his desire to work in cooperation within larger bodies all reveal the same desperate hope and social optimism that is seen in his argument that Wagner is the modern Aeschylus.

To provide the necessary education within his ideal state, Nietzsche would have society come together in the production of an elite class of artists, whose art will redeem German society. Plato does not posit a theory of redemption that fends off nihilism in the *Republic*, though he is dissatisfied with the political world around him. He presents the model of a political system that manifests justice through the various efforts of distinct social classes. As a piece of literature, the *Republic* offers an image of the Form of Justice. Nietzsche sees aspects of this image that relate to his own ideal. Both the mundane aspects of Plato's theory, such as the division of labor and the hierarchy resulting from it, as well as the more mystical aspects, like the communion with the Good necessary for his leaders, are all active in Nietzsche's depiction of an ideal German state.

Nietzsche's exploration of ideas presented in the *Republic* is just as filled with modern German ideas and images as it is inspired by the Greeks. At one point in the lectures, he criticizes his philological colleagues for burying their own modern

„Bequemlichkeiten und Liebhabereien“ among the ancient ruins of antiquity and then celebrating when they rediscover them „in antiker Umgebung.“<sup>8</sup> Is this all that Nietzsche is doing with his lectures? Yes and no. In the passage where Nietzsche is criticizing his colleagues, he gives as an example a philologist who believes he has found Christian morality within the text of the *Oedipus Rex*. In contrast, Nietzsche’s lectures are not a philological reading of the *Republic*. They do not even mention it, let alone examine a single passage from it. Though they display a form and content similar to that of the *Republic*, the lectures are not at all presented as a reading of the text that is revealing modern ideas embedded within it. In that sense then, no, Nietzsche is not simply finding his own cares and hobbies in ancient environs.

In a broader sense, however, Nietzsche is certainly finding his own, modern concerns in his investigation of ideas from antiquity. In adopting the Platonic dialog as his genre and exploring many of the ideas found in Plato (and other ancient sources), Nietzsche is only focused on the present. He is not examining a text from Plato in order to offer a reading that attempts to stay as true to the text as possible. He is adopting a Platonic pose, independent of the text, in order to try out how applicable Plato’s ideas and approaches are to modernity’s problems. This Platonic vantage point is particularly fruitful for Nietzsche as many of the ideas he is testing are firmly within the intellectual traditions that have Plato at their root. Many other ideas are opposed to the Platonic tradition. Assuming Plato’s position allows him to sort out and examine both sets of ideas. As will be seen, Nietzsche adopts multiple poses—that of the philologist, the historicist, the German classicist, the Schopenhauerian, and others—in order to both try out the usefulness of their approaches and to find their limitations. Unlike the philologist

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<sup>8</sup> “comforts and hobbies ... in antique environs.” ZB 701.

who reads Christianity into Sophocles' text, Nietzsche is not reading Plato here at all. He is playing Plato.

This model of trying on, as it were, the thoughts of others will be a central recommendation of the lectures in Nietzsche's discussions of reading both the German classicists and the ancient authors. This paper examines the apparently Platonic pose, which Nietzsche never admits he is taking, in order to better understand his thought at the time. That is, this paper explores the latent Platonism and the structure and content so similar to the *Republic* found in the lectures in order to paint a picture of the Nietzschean way in which Nietzsche approaches the ancients during his first year of published work.

Though Nietzsche's early period is enjoying increasing academic attention, it has generally been neglected and considered less important than what is usually considered to be his more "mature" work.<sup>9</sup> This blame for this rests most likely with Walter Kaufmann, to whom the English speaking world owes the greatest debt of gratitude for rescuing and opening up the field of Nietzsche studies. He once wrote that "neither *The Birth of Tragedy* nor his other early books can brook comparison with Nietzsche's later works, beginning with *The Gay Science*. *The Birth of Tragedy* is widely overrated, but the later Nietzsche is inexhaustible."<sup>10</sup> Kaufmann's monumental work to rescue Nietzsche's image from that of an anti-Semite and proto-Nazi did not require, and may have been somewhat problematized by, Nietzsche's early work. This paper attempts to show how Nietzsche's earlier engagement with antiquity, and the playfully posturing

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<sup>9</sup> *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition* from 1976, edited by James C. O'Flaherty, and *Nietzsche and Antiquity* from 2004, edited by Paul Bishop are the only two collections of essays focused on Nietzsche's engagement with antiquity during his professional years. James I. Porter's *The Invention of Dionysos* and *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future*, both from 2000, provide the most comprehensive and rigorous examination of the young philologist Nietzsche. All four works are cited consistently throughout this paper.

<sup>10</sup> 254.

form of this engagement, is such a fruitful source of his later ideas on the value of art for modernity and of his approach to modernity that have received so much more attention.

## *Chapter 1*

### **MODERN PROBLEMS**

In the *Republic*, Plato's ostensible concern, as expressed by Socrates, is to define justice in the individual. The discussion of the constitution of the ideal state is presented only as the means to discovering that definition. Because of this, Plato offers little direct criticism of the state in which he currently lives or of its institutions. At least he does not offer any criticism as direct as that which Nietzsche presents in his discussion of the state and its institutions of *Bildung*. Before the areas where Nietzsche and Plato's ideas intersect most are discussed, Nietzsche's criticism of his contemporary world needs to be examined. The few intersections with Plato's thought that are found there will be examined as they come up.

### **DIGNITY**

*Der griechische Staat* establishes, in large part, Nietzsche's justification for slavery by arguing its necessity for Greek society and the accomplishment of Greek culture. *Würde des Menschen* and *Würde der Arbeit* are, according to Nietzsche, two



modern concepts that the Greeks did not have.<sup>11</sup> Instead Nietzsche attributes to the Greeks „eine verborgene“ though „überall lebendige Weisheit,“ which teaches that „das Menschending ein schmähhliches und klägliches Nichts und eines ‚Schattens Traum‘ sei.“<sup>12</sup> This is clearly the same nihilistic wisdom he attaches to Dionysus through Silenus in order to ground the pessimistic character he attributes to Greek tragedy in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. There Silenus teaches that what is best of all for humans is „nicht geboren zu sein, nicht zu s e i n , n i c h t s zu sein. Das Zweitbeste aber is für dich — bald zu sterben.“<sup>13</sup>

A cultural chasm separates Nietzsche’s contemporaries from the ancient Greeks due to their modern notions of human dignity. Once they ascribe a sense of dignity to the members of the working class, these laborers are seen as qualified for *Bildung*. Nietzsche believes he shares the worldview of the Greeks in denying any worth to the labor of members of any working class. Still, it is important to keep in mind that Nietzsche, as will be shown below, does not ascribe dignity to any other class either. To do such would be equally out of step with his Greeks for whom there was simply no need for any sense of dignity for humanity.<sup>14</sup> For Nietzsche, the notions of the dignity of human life and labor are all too modern.

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<sup>11</sup> human dignity, dignity of labor. GS 764.

<sup>12</sup> “a hidden ... everywhere alive wisdom ... the human thing is a dishonorable and lamentable nothing and a ‘dream of a shadow.’ ” GS 765.

<sup>13</sup> “to not be born, to not *be*, to be *nothing*. The second best, however, is for you — to die soon.” GT 35.

<sup>14</sup> GS 764-765.

## EXPANSION AND DIMINUTION OF *BILDUNG*

Due to this modern belief in human dignity, Nietzsche sees *Bildung* as suffering from two „scheinbar entgegengesetzte, in ihrem Wirken gleich verderbliche, in ihren Resultaten endlich zusammenfließende Strömungen,“ which are „einmal der Trieb nach möglichster *Erweiterung und Verbreitung der Bildung*, dann der Trieb nach *Verminderung und Abschwächung der Bildung selbst*.“<sup>15</sup> The expansion is expressed in the democratic will to create as many institutions of *Bildung* as possible for as many students as possible since all are deemed worthy of education. Nietzsche believes that such an arrangement withers the flower of culture as it draws those whom he sees suited only to labor for life's necessities away from their duties. It also removes those whom he believes should be artists and philosophers from the tasks he views as most natural to them, as will be discussed in more detail below. For Nietzsche, the single purpose of *Bildung* is to give birth to Genius in order to achieve aesthetic redemption.

Nietzsche's "Genius," central to his argument, is a metaphysical entity, which "appears" in the midst of a properly cultivated people bringing the moment of aesthetic redemption. Through its agency the few talented and educated artists produce the art responsible for the redemption of all. The role of Genius in Nietzsche's picture of metaphysical redemption will be examined toward the end of this paper. At this point, it is important to understand that the modern world, through its notion of dignity „demokratisiert die Rechte des Genius, um der eignen Bildungsarbeit und Bildungsnoth

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<sup>15</sup> "apparently opposed currents, equally corruptive in their operation and finally flowing together in their results.... first the drive for the greatest possible *expansion of Bildung* and then the drive for the *diminution and weakening of Bildung* itself." ZB 667.

enthoben zu sein.“<sup>16</sup> In securing *Bildung* for all, modern society insures that none will have it and, in turn, that modern society will never raise itself to the point of aesthetic redemption through the birth of Genius.

Nietzsche finds the weakening of *Bildung* expressed in the tendencies to set money-making and state service as its goals. This requires *Bildung* „ihre höchsten edelsten und erhabensten Ansprüche aufzugeben und sich im Dienste irgend einer anderen Lebensform, etwa des Staates zu bescheiden.“<sup>17</sup> The existing arrangement precludes the emergence of any true culture, as a culture capable of giving birth to Genius is not even the aim of modern *Bildung*. The weakening of *Bildung* is also evident in the historical methods modern *Bildung* employs. Nietzsche attributes these methods to the indolence of the teachers of *Bildung*. These goals and methods will now be examined.

## GOAL OF MODERN *BILDUNG*

Though he entitled his lectures *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*, Nietzsche does not actually think German institutions of *Bildung* have a future. They do not even have a present as none can be considered institutions of true *Bildung*.<sup>18</sup> He is not suggesting a process of altering what exists as much as he is proposing the creation of entirely new institutions. In his preface to the lectures, he muses that the destruction of the *Gymnasium* and university may be on the horizon. There must, at any rate, be „eine so totale Umgestaltung der eben genannten Bildungsanstalten, daß deren alte Tabelle sich

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<sup>16</sup> “democratizes the rights of Genius in order to be free of the personal labor of *Bildung* and the necessity of *Bildung*.” ZB 666.

<sup>17</sup> “to give up highest, noblest and most sublime claims and be satisfied in the service of some other life form, the state for instance.” ZB 667.

<sup>18</sup> See ZB 712, 717-718.

späteren Augen wie Überreste aus der Pfahlbauzeiten darstellen möchten.“<sup>19</sup> Thus, Nietzsche clears the ground for himself theoretically to construct an entirely new system of *Bildung*. Plato had provided himself the same opportunity to describe both his city and its system of education from the ground up. Like Plato, Nietzsche puts himself in a position to invite his audience to theorize their future institutions from the beginning as if saying to them, “tōi logōi ex arkhēs poiōmen polin.”<sup>20</sup>

The current state of *Bildung* is untenable for Nietzsche because money-making is one of its main goals. Nietzsche sees the call for the expansion and weakening of *Bildung* as an expression of „die beliebten nationalökonomischen Dogmen der Gegenwart. Möglichst viel Erkenntniß und Bildung — daher möglichst viel Produktion und Bedürfniß — daher möglichst viel Glück....“ For the state, the „eigentliche Bildungsaufgabe wäre demnach möglichst ‚courante‘ Menschen zu bilden, in der Art dessen, was man an einer Münze ‚courant‘ nennt.“ A greater quantity of “current” people equals greater social happiness.<sup>21</sup>

Nietzsche’s criticism of utility as a goal for the state and its system of education echoes one of Plato’s. Plato discusses the ideal state and the four inferior constitutions that devolve out of it (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny) in Book VIII. One major difference between a timocracy and Plato’s ideal is that money is valued by

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<sup>19</sup> “such a total reconfiguration of the just named educational institutions that their former regulations might appear as remains from the Stone Age to later eyes.” ZB 648-649.

<sup>20</sup> “through our reasoning let us create a state from the beginning.” *Respublica* 1. 369c.

<sup>21</sup> “the beloved national-economic dogmas of the present. As much knowledge and *Bildung* as possible, hence, as much supply and demand as possible, hence, as much happiness as possible.... The actual task of *Bildung* would thus be to make people as ‘courante’ as possible, in the manner in which one refers to coins as ‘courante’.” ZB 667.

timocrats even though his ideal rulers should not seek any private property.<sup>22</sup> As the timocracy degenerates into an oligarchy, money becomes a preoccupation for those in power, and the love of money becomes the characteristic trait of the oligarchy.<sup>23</sup>

Nietzsche, though, does not seem to be taking his view of the problem of utility directly from Plato. His distaste for the modern concept of utility stems from his opposition to the burgeoning of a massive middle class and its leveling culture as a result of the liberal politics and capitalist economics of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Like Plato, however, Nietzsche sees utility as a problem inasmuch as it thwarts the development of his ideal of culture by distracting people from their natural tasks.

While Plato is only concerned with where the guardians will focus their energy, Nietzsche is worried that the love of money will draw all members of society from their “natural” tasks. Nietzsche sees utility as a problem for those he would exclude from higher culture inasmuch as capitalist economics elevates them to participation in the production and consumption culture. Plato has no concern for the aesthetic quality of the arts in the state. He is only concerned with the morally educative potential of its content. It is not until the next degeneration of Plato’s state into a democracy that he becomes concerned with the release of all from what he considers to be their natural roles. Nietzsche is most concerned with the way the German state sets utility as the educational goal to serve its own purposes, as this channels the focus of all away from the creation of a culture capable of aesthetic redemption.

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<sup>22</sup> *Respublica* ll. 548a-b.

<sup>23</sup> *Respublica* ll. 550c-551b.

## METHODS OF MODERN *BILDUNG*

In his preface on Schopenhauer's philosophy, Nietzsche says, „Der Gebildete ist jetzt vor allem *h i s t o r i s c h* gebildet: durch sein historisches Bewußtsein rettet er sich vor dem Erhabenen....“<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche considers encounters with the sublime, not as Kantian moments of sensing one's reason or freedom, but as the experience of being thrown into a philosophic crisis which is anything but comforting. This crisis of recognizing human life as an unjustified existence, as Nietzsche sees it, inspires both artists and philosophers to grapple with the problems it presents.

The so-called *Gebildeten*, however, seek „gerade die Abstumpfung alles Enthusiasmus“ through their historical approach to inquiry.<sup>25</sup> Instead of investigating how or even why one should continue in an existence apparently without meaning, the historical scholar avoids the question by industriously carving out and amassing facts about existence. Nietzsche paints a picture of the *gebildete* philosopher confronting the great problems: he imagines he has philosophy when he „klettert [...] an der sogenannten Geschichte der Philosophie herum [und] eine ganze Wolke von [...] Abstraktionen und Schablonen zusammengesucht und aufgethürmet hat“.<sup>26</sup>

Nietzsche believes that history will reveal nothing more to such scholars than „Trivialitäten und Nichtigkeiten“ like „einen Gesandtschaftsbericht, [...] eine Jahreszahl oder eine Etymologie oder ein pragmatisches Spinnengewebe.“ Nietzsche asks the historically-minded scholars, „Glaubt ihr wirklich die Geschichte zusammenrechnen zu

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<sup>24</sup> “The educated one is above all now *historically* educated: through his historical consciousness he saves himself from the sublime....” SP 780.

<sup>25</sup> “precisely the blunting of all enthusiasm” SP 780.

<sup>26</sup> “climbs around on the so-called history of philosophy [and] gathers together and piles up an entire cloud of ... abstractions and stencil-patterns....” SP 781.

können wie ein Additionsexempel und haltet ihr dafür euren gemeinen Verstand und eure mathematische Bildung für gut genug?“<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche sees this so-called “historical *Bildung*” as inculcating „ein tollgewordener Glaube an die Vernünftigkeit alles Geschehenden“<sup>28</sup> It has also discovered the formula for, and is resulting in, the „Selbstvernichtung der Philosophie.“<sup>29</sup> This Hegelian approach to history avoids the inspiring problems of existence by merely noting amassed facts and pronouncing them constituents of an inevitably rational order.

When Nietzsche attacks an approach as “historical,” it is important to note that he is not attacking genealogical investigations. Nietzsche will later make seminal arguments about morality and other issues by means of developmental analysis. What he is attacking as “historical” is the calm amassing of facts as individual entities. Separated into the discrete “facts” of an eternally rational history, they lose their crisis-provoking power. Nietzsche does not categorically dismiss history. He believes rather that history should serve to naturally arouse enthusiasm, taking Goethe as a witness of this.<sup>30</sup>

Historicism is a virtue for Nietzsche, albeit one that has grown out of hand. He opens *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (written in 1873 – one year after his lectures on *Bildung*; hereafter *Nutzen und Nachtheil*) with the quote From Goethe just alluded to: „Uebrigens ist mir Alles verhasst, was ich bloss belehrt, ohne

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<sup>27</sup> “trivialities and vanities.... an ambassadorial report, ... a date, or an etymology, or a practical spider web.... Do you really believe you are able to add history together like an addition problem, and do you consider your collective understanding and your mathematical education good enough for this?” SP 780-781.

<sup>28</sup> “a faith gone mad in the rationality of everything that happens.” ZB 725.

<sup>29</sup> “self-destruction of philosophy” ZB 742.

<sup>30</sup> SP 780.

meine Thätigkeit zu vermehren, oder unmittelbar zu beleben.“<sup>31</sup> Making a tripartite division of history into the monumental, antiquarian and critical species (not evident in the lectures), Nietzsche then goes on to explain that history must serve life, at which point it becomes quite beneficial. All three forms of history, used in correct measure, can be powerful sources of inspiration to the philosophers and artists of the future crucial to bringing about the aesthetic redemption of their people. Nietzsche considers history just as necessary to life as the freedom from history.<sup>32</sup>

The problem in historicism Nietzsche is criticizing in the lectures can be seen in his critique of philology given there. It is the philologists who teach to the youth Homer, the tragedians, and all of the other artists of antiquity whom Nietzsche considers the „leibhaften kategorischen Imperativ aller Kultur.“<sup>33</sup> As will be seen, the study of these artists will constitute the final and most important step in Nietzsche’s educational system of inducing Genius. In a jab at institutional philosophy, Nietzsche reveals his view of academic philology:

So ist langsam, an Stelle einer tiefsinnigen Ausdeutung der ewig gleichen Probleme ein historisches, ja selbst ein philologisches Abwägen und Fragen getreten: was der und jener Philosoph gedacht habe oder nicht oder ob die und jene Schrift ihm mit Recht zuzuschreiben sei oder gar ob diese oder jene Lesart den Vorzug verdiene. Zu einem derartigen neutralen Sichbefassen mit Philosophie werden jetzt unsere Studenten in den philosophischen Seminarien

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<sup>31</sup> “In any case, I hate everything that merely instructs me without augmenting or directly invigorating my activity.” NN Foreword.

<sup>32</sup> NN §1, §2.

<sup>33</sup> “incarnate categorical imperative of all culture.” ZB 741.



unserer Universitäten angereizt: weshalb ich mich längst gewöhnt habe, eine solche Wissenschaft als Abzweigung der Philologie zu betrachten und ihre Vertreter darnach abzuschätzen, ob sie gut Philologen sind oder nicht.<sup>34</sup>

The field of philology, which Nietzsche believes should introduce future philosophers and artists to their greatest models, has been absorbed by the scholarly approach that seeks to dissect and amass in the attempt to present the rational. For Nietzsche, antiquity has almost been destroyed for the modern world, and many moderns, including philologists, have lost interest in it.

The initial motivation to investigate the classical world grows out of the cultural ideals of 18<sup>th</sup> century classicists like Goethe, Winckelmann, Schiller and others. The phenomenon of “Weimar Classicism” posits the Greeks as a model of whole and unified culture and is rooted in Winckelmann’s theories on art. These focus on beauty as the supreme element in art, which is to be found in the serene harmony of form.<sup>35</sup> This “classical” ideal of wholeness and unity venerated as proper to the Greeks was likely embraced in reaction to the turbulent political, economic and even philosophic climate of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup>

As the academic study of antiquity develops out of this ideal, its practitioners come to view the classicists as too idealistic, and they eventually find their ideal of

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<sup>34</sup> “So in place of a profound interpretation of the eternally identical problems, a historical, even a philological assessment and query has stepped in: what this or that philosopher thought or not, or whether this or that text is correctly ascribed to him, or even whether this or that version of a text deserves preference. Our students in the philosophy seminars of our universities are now provoked to just such a neutral engagement with philosophy: which is why I have long ago accustomed myself to consider such a science as a branch of philology and to evaluate its representatives according to whether they are good philologists or not.” ZB 742-743.

<sup>35</sup> See Weinberg 94-95, Ulfers and Cohen 426, Held 414 and Siemens 400.

<sup>36</sup> See Emden 378 and Held 413, 417.

antiquity empty and useless.<sup>37</sup> Though it has been argued that Nietzsche embodies the reemergence of Weimar Classicism, he also sees the danger of the classicist ideal becoming nothing more than a distorted, oversimplified caricature, as this risk is inherent to the process of idealization and simplification that classicism must employ.<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche still does not entirely side with the philologists who have turned away from ancient culture and are convinced „daß die direkte Berührung mit dem klassischen Alterthume für sie nutzlos und hoffnungslos sei.“ The study of antiquity is thus considered by many academics „als steril, als ausgelebt, als epigonenhaft.“<sup>39</sup>

These scholars now turn to linguistics where the sterile techniques they developed as philologists can direct their methods without frustration. They spend their days „unter Verknüpfen und Trennen, Sammeln und Zerstreuen.“ It is „als ob die griechischen Schulstunden nur der Vorwand für eine allgemeine Einleitung in das Sprachstudium seien und als ob Homer nur an einem principiellen Fehler leide, nämlich nicht urindogermanisch geschrieben zu sein.“<sup>40</sup> Homer, in whom Nietzsche finds so many of his cultural and moral ideals as the ancients did, has been dissected into nothing more than a set of disappointingly recent, for the linguists, elements of Indo-European morphology and vocabulary. To the historical scholar, Homer certainly has nothing moral or aesthetic to offer. And he offers no approaches to the problems of existence.

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<sup>37</sup> See Silk and Stern 13-14 and Lloyd-Jones 5.

<sup>38</sup> See NN §2. For Nietzsche as the reemergence of Weimar Classicism, see Bishop and Stephenson 2. Nietzsche also notes that the Apollinian tendency can tend to a life-denying Egypticism in GT §9. He will continue to use the image of a mummy to represent lifeless concepts as the aged Goethe did in referring to the danger of excessive classicism (Ulfers and Cohen 427-8).

<sup>39</sup>“that direct contact with classical antiquity is useless and hopeless for them.... as sterile, lived out, and epigonic.” ZB 703.

<sup>40</sup> “in combining and separating, collecting and scattering.... as if the hours spent on Greek were only the pretense for a general introduction to the study of languages and as if Homer suffered from only one principle fault, namely, to not be written in Proto-Indogermanic.” ZB 704.

A scholar with such views can not possibly raise the German youth to the state of culture Nietzsche desires. „Das Alterthum sagt ihm nichts, und folglich hat er nichts über das Alterthum zu sagen.“ This lack of communication with antiquity only perpetuates itself as it forces itself upon the next generation: „Wer die jetztigen Gymnasien kennt, der weiß, wie sehr ihre Lehrer der klassischen Tendenz entfremdet sind, und wie aus einem Gefühle dieses Mangels gerade jene gelehrten Beschäftigungen mit der vergleichenden Sprachwissenschaft so überhand genommen haben.“<sup>41</sup>

Nietzsche does not want the teachers of *Bildung* to spend their time using the Greeks and Romans to simply find the linguistic similarities that tie them to other groups. Any such task must serve as an ancillary to true *Bildung*, which stimulates and nourishes the philosophic impulses that produce a living culture. This is not a cry to abolish comparative linguistics or to stop charting the development of languages, but to stop construing these studies as the end goal of *Bildung*. They serve only to understand antiquity. And this understanding only serves as the means to true *Bildung*.

To achieve Nietzsche's cultural goal the greater focus of the philologists in education should rather be trained „gerade an dem N i c h t g e m e i n s a m e n, gerade an dem, was jene Völker als nicht barbarische über alle anderen Völker stellt.“<sup>42</sup> The teacher of *Bildung* must focus on what it was that set the Greeks and Romans apart in their approach to life and in their art. This would be his focus to the extent that he were a

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<sup>41</sup> “Antiquity says nothing to them, and accordingly they have nothing to say about antiquity.... Whoever is acquainted with the current gymnasiums knows how much their teachers are distanced from the classical tendency and how those scholarly preoccupations with comparative linguistics get out of hand from the sense of this lack.” ZB 704.

<sup>42</sup> “on precisely what is *not common*, precisely on that which placed those nations above all other nations as not being barbaric.” ZB 704-705.

true teacher of *Bildung* and „sich selbst an dem erhabenen Vorbild des Klassischen umbilden will.“<sup>43</sup>

Philology, as a modern, German discipline, begins in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a unified study that seeks to understand classical antiquity as a whole in the classicist spirit of Goethe and others. Though its founder, F.A. Wolf, envisions *Altertumswissenschaft* as a unified study that approaches antiquity as a whole, and though his style is open and accessible, his work determines the impending splintering of the field and its methodologies that become increasingly inaccessible.<sup>44</sup> The unified German search for Greek wholeness is soon a broadly specialized field accessible only to its scholars. Nietzsche identifies the influence and example of the natural sciences as the factors that severed *Altertumswissenschaft* from humanity.<sup>45</sup>

The modern, disengaged hunger for knowledge has resulted in a field that is so broad that only very few can ever be any good at any aspect. The specialized scholar is rendered just like a factory worker who does nothing more than turn a particular screw or pull a certain handle „worin er dann freilich eine unglaubliche Virtuosität erlangt.“<sup>46</sup> Among philologists Nietzsche finds one who counts the number of verses in classical poetry and is delighted in discovering the „Proportion 7 : 13 = 14 : 26.“ Another vows to solve a problem like the Homeric one „vom Standpunkt der Präpositionen und glaubt mit

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<sup>43</sup> “wants to refashion himself according to the sublime model of the classical.” ZB 705.

<sup>44</sup> See Silk and Stern 12-14.

<sup>45</sup> NN §4; see also Lloyd-Jones 5.

<sup>46</sup> “in which they do indeed acquire an incredible virtuosity.” ZB 670.

ana und kata die Wahrheit aus dem Brunnen zu ziehn.“<sup>47</sup> This academic specialization „strebt praktisch nach dem gleichen Ziele, nach dem hier und da die Religionen mit Bewußtsein streben: nach einer Verringerung der Bildung, ja nach einer Vernichtung derselben.“<sup>48</sup>

This fatally fragmenting tendency to dissect and specialize may only be the „Entartung einer ächten deutschen Tugend [...] — einer innigen Versenkung in das Einzelne Kleine Nächste und in die Mysterien des Individuums — aber diese verschimmelte Tugend ist jetzt schlimmer als das offenbarste Laster.“<sup>49</sup> Like historicism itself, a deep immersion in the detail is a virtue for Nietzsche. He believes it is not a problematic approach to questions as long as it is motivated by a passionate *engagement* with the problem of life. As it manifests itself in the German academy, Nietzsche sees it merely as an escape from the problematic questions of an existence he finds to be without meaning or value.

Nietzsche wishes a voice would call out to the philologists trespassing on the holy ground of antiquity, „Weg von hier, Ihr Uneingeweihten, Ihr niemals Einzuweihenden, flüchtet schweigend aus diesem Heiligthum, schweigend und beschämt!“<sup>50</sup> A profane pollution, modern scholars have no right to speak a word on what they have illicitly seen in antiquity due to their lifeless love of the accumulation of details. In the process of

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<sup>47</sup> “from the standpoint of prepositions and believes he draws the truth out of the well with *ana* and *kata*.” ZB 702

<sup>48</sup> “practically strives for the same goal for which religions occasionally strive consciously: for a diminution of *Bildung*, even for the annihilation of it.” ZB 670.

<sup>49</sup> “degeneration of a genuinely German virtue — a deep immersion in the detail, the minute, the proximate, and in the mystery of the individual — but this moldy virtue is now worse than the most apparent vice.” SP 779.

<sup>50</sup> “Away from here you uninitiated ones, you who will never be initiated. Flee in silence from this sanctum, in silence and shame!” ZB 701.

dissecting the body of a language or a piece of literature, they are shattering the very image of antiquity. Nietzsche uses an image evoking the classical wholeness originally sought in the study of antiquity to describe academic philology as the spectacle of scholars continually trying to raise the statue of classical Greece. They are not equal to the task and keep getting crushed every time the statue falls again. His concern is not, of course, for the humans being flattened. „Die Philologen gehen an den Griechen zu Grunde — das wäre etwa zu verschmerzen — aber das Alterthum zerbricht durch die Philologen selbst in Stücke!“<sup>51</sup>

## RESULTS OF MODERN *BILDUNG*

The character of Nietzsche's young friend in the dialog speaks for modernity when he claims that education at the *Gymnasium* should make us „selbstständig genug für die außerordentlich freie Stellung eines Akademikers.“<sup>52</sup> This disgusts the philosopher who then paints an repulsive portrait of academic freedom. He explains that the only connection a student has to his professors is during lectures. Even then, he chooses what he hears and how much of it he writes. The academically freed student is otherwise cut off from *Bildung*. „Wenn er spricht, wenn er sieht, wenn er geht, wenn er gesellig ist, wenn er Künste treibt, kurz wenn er lebt, ist er selbstständig d.h. unabhängig von der Bildungsanstalt.“<sup>53</sup> He goes on to say that „nie war eine Zeit so reich an den schönsten Selbständigkeiten; nie haßte man so stark jede Sklaverei, auch freilich die

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<sup>51</sup> “The philologists are perishing on the Greeks — that could likely be gotten over — but antiquity itself is being broken into pieces by the philologists!” ZB 703.

<sup>52</sup> “independent enough for the extraordinarily free position of the academic.” ZB 738.

<sup>53</sup> “When he speaks, when he sees, when he goes, when he is social, when he engages in the arts, in short, when he lives, he is independent, i.e., not attached to the educational institution.” ZB 739.

Slaverei der Erziehung und der Bildung.“<sup>54</sup> “Academic freedom” is an escape from slavery, and *none* should escape slavery in Nietzsche’s vision of society.

Plato also describes such a state of undisciplined freedom as harmful to the state. Such freedom, he believes, characterizes democracy, the next stage of constitutional deterioration after the oligarchy.<sup>55</sup> Nietzsche’s university students are like Plato’s democratic citizens who are allowed to yield to all appetites. The democratic person is ruled by what Plato considers to be useless appetites, i.e., by those not necessary to survival.<sup>56</sup> This democratic freedom destroys the educational system and leads to a form of anarchy where the natural hierarchy of humanity is no longer acknowledged and all are treated and act as equals.<sup>57</sup> On this point, Nietzsche and Plato are in nearly complete harmony, seeing this freedom as a denial of nature. It denies, that is, fulfilling the needs that contribute directly to survival as it also denies the hierarchy Plato and Nietzsche see as natural for humans (which will be discussed in greater detail below). Both believe that such a state of freedom places the state in great danger and can only lead to its further decay.<sup>58</sup>

The effect of academic freedom on the students is, according to Nietzsche, devastating. At schools filled with the unqualified, the few who are qualified doubt themselves even though, or because, they seem to be the only free ones in a crowd of

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<sup>54</sup> “never was a time so rich in the most beautiful independences, one never hated every form of slavery so strongly, especially not the slavery of education and culture.” ZB 738-740.

<sup>55</sup> *Respublica* II. 557b-558c.

<sup>56</sup> *Respublica* II. 559b-561d.

<sup>57</sup> *Respublica* II. 562a-564a.

<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Plato argues that a constitution characterized by freedom leads to an anarchic state of emergency. In this state, the people turn frantically to a seemingly strong leader who becomes dictator. This only worsens the state of affairs for the state. This is, of course, what happened to the generation of Germans that followed Nietzsche’s. See *Respublica* II. 564a-566a.

officials and servants. They are aware that they lack the teachers necessary to achieve their potential. They occasionally give their best effort but are always unsuccessful. Eventually they come to hate their task and themselves and, in a state of depression, turn to utilitarian work and goals. This is „das Bild jener gerühmten Selbständigkeit, jener akademischen Freiheit, wiedergespiegelt in den besten und wahrhaft bildungsbedürftigen Seelen....“<sup>59</sup> Those poor ones who need *Bildung* and are denied it become its enemies. „Es sind nicht die schlechtesten und die geringsten, die wir dann als Journalisten und Zeitungsschreiber, in der Metamorphose der Verzweiflung, wiederfinden. [...] Hier entdecken wir ein gleichsam wildgewordenes Bildungsbedürfnis, welches sich endlich selbst bis zu dem Schrei erhitzt: ich bin die Bildung.“<sup>60</sup> The expansion and diminution of *Bildung* come together in journalism and „reichen sich hier die Hand.“<sup>61</sup> Here *Bildung* is disseminated to all and is diluted for them by those who should have achieved *Bildung* in its full strength.

Nietzsche does not blame the corrupted student for his state. He asserts that the misguided student is „u n s c h u l d i g: so wie ihr ihn erkannt habt, klagt er stumm, doch fürchterlich die Schuldigen an.“<sup>62</sup> What society, as a guilty whole, should provide for their students is „eine wahre Bildungsinstitution, die ihnen Ziele, Meister, Methoden,

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<sup>59</sup> “the picture of that vaunted independence, that academic freedom, reflected back in the best souls which are truly in need of *Bildung*....” ZB 744-745.

<sup>60</sup> “It is not the worst and lowest who we find again in the metamorphosis of doubt as journalists and writers for newspapers.... Here we discover a need for culture gone wild, as it were, which finally boils over into the cry, ‘I am culture.’” ZB 746.

<sup>61</sup> “shake hands here.” ZB 671.

<sup>62</sup> “*guiltless*: as you have recognized him, he mutely, though still terribly, accuses the guilty ones.” ZB 744.



Vorbilder, Genossen geben konnte.“<sup>63</sup> Nietzsche’s solution will be investigated in detail below. In order to do so, it is necessary to further clarify Nietzsche’s ideas of slavery, aristocracy and dignity in an explanation of how he believes nature produces certain types of humans for specific roles within a healthy society.

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<sup>63</sup> “a true institution of *Bildung*, which could give them goals, masters, methods, exemplars, and companions.” ZB 747.

## Chapter 2

### NATURE

Nietzsche believes Germany has far more educational institutions „als die Natur eines Volkes, auch bei reicher Anlage, zu erzeugen vermöchte.“<sup>64</sup> The „laute Herolde“ of this expanded *Bildung* turn out to be, when studied closely, the opponents of *Bildung* and of those who hold to „der aristokratischen Natur des Geistes.“ Nietzsche believes that what these clamorous dilutors of *Bildung* really want is to destroy „die heiligste Ordnung im Reiche des Intellectes,“ which consists of „die Dienstbarkeit der Masse, ihren unterwürfigen Gehorsam, ihren Instinkt der Treue unter dem Scepter des Genius.“<sup>65</sup> Nietzsche diagnoses the modern notion of human dignity offended by both slavery and aristocracy as the cause of this crisis in German *Bildung*. For Nietzsche, as for Plato, precisely these social institutions are necessary for a healthy state. He also believes that the subservience of the masses, not to the few but to Genius, will allow “natural” forces to aesthetically redeem the entire society.

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<sup>64</sup> “than the nature of a people, even with a rich facility, is able to produce.” ZB 696-697.

<sup>65</sup> “noisy heralds ... the aristocratic nature of the mind ... the holiest order in the realm of the intellect ... the subservience of the masses, their submissive obedience, their instinct of loyalty under the scepter of Genius.” ZB 698.

## NATURAL NEEDS

Nietzsche's "nature" will eventually win out against modernity's excrescent form of *Bildung* to reestablish a healthy order in the social body.<sup>66</sup> For him, the two tendencies of modern *Bildung* must necessarily be counteracted by its „V e r e n g e r u n g und K o n c e n t r a t i o n“ on the one hand and its „S t ä r k u n g und S e l b s t g e n u g - s a m k e i t“ on the other. The victory over what he considers the unnatural tendencies of modernity is assured for Nietzsche with his notion that „jene beiden Tendenzen der Erweiterung und Verminderung ebenso den ewig gleichen Absichten der Natur entgegenlaufen als eine Concentration (sic) der Bildung auf Wenige ein nothwendiges Gesetz derselben Natur, überhaupt eine Wahrheit ist.“ This assurance is underscored by the recognition that it is only possible for the two modern drives „eine erlogene Kultur zu begründen.“<sup>67</sup>

One difficult question is what the difference is for Nietzsche between what is natural and what is fabricated. Modern education, with its two tendencies can only result, for Nietzsche, in a culture that is *erlogen*.<sup>68</sup> If the world consists of natural, instinctive drives and their appearances (the phenomenal form they take in human consciousness), then it would seem that any culture resulting from a drive is as natural as a culture produced by any other. Even if modernity has resulted from a resentful drive in the masses to participate in culture, it is still the result of a drive.

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<sup>66</sup> ZB 645-646.

<sup>67</sup> “*narrowing and concentration ... strengthening and self-sufficiency ... both of these tendencies of expansion and diminution equally contravene the eternally constant intentions of Nature just as a concentration of education for a few is a necessary law of the same nature, a truth in any case ... to establish a fabricated culture.*” ZB 647.

<sup>68</sup> *Erlogen*, as the past participle of *erlügen*, literally means something that is fabricated in language, such as a lie (*die Lüge*).

At this point in his thinking career, the only goal Nietzsche can posit as worthwhile for humans is to achieve aesthetic redemption. What he must mean by a “natural” culture as opposed to a fabricated one is a culture that results from allowing what he views as the most basic drives of humanity to act unhindered towards the birth of Genius and aesthetic redemption. Nietzsche may be calling the modern culture that obstructs the achievement of these ends *erlogen* inasmuch as he simply considers it a lie to describe such a state as “culture” because it is incapable of leading to aesthetic redemption. If this is true, then, with his notions of “natural” and “fabricated,” Nietzsche may be showing more about the way we cognize the world in language than about the activities of instinctive drives. Nietzsche would be using his notion of nature to expose the way in which concepts embody prejudices.

Other aspects of his concept of nature are seen in two drives related to the foundation of culture. Nietzsche proposes these drives described as human needs in *Dem griechischen Staat*. For human existence to continue, the first need to be fulfilled is clearly the need for survival. This manifests itself in every life form, including humans. „Alles quält sich, um ein elendes Leben elend zu perpetuieren; diese furchtbare Noth zwingt zu verzehrender Arbeit, die nun der vom ‚Willen‘ verführte Mensch — oder richtiger — menschliche Intellekt gelegentlich als etwas Würdevolles anstaunt.“<sup>69</sup> The illusion of the dignity of one’s activity arises from the compulsion that drives one to it. The existence of a need, however, does not necessarily entail its dignity any more than it entails its fulfillment. All that is demonstrated by the need for labor is the same *drive* for

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<sup>69</sup> “Everything toils in order to wretchedly perpetuate a wretched life; this dreadful necessity compels one to consuming labor, about which the person now ensnared by the ‘Will’ or, more accurately, the human intellect now occasionally wonders as something dignified.” GS 764.

existence that causes plants to push their roots through stone. The notion of dignity is simply an error.<sup>70</sup>

If humans are successful in securing their survival, Nietzsche believes they have only succeeded in continuing an existence void of any absolute value. There is, though, something that can seduce them into continuing their existence without their intellect being paralyzed by a constant, dreadful notion of life's utter worthlessness. Here arises the second need, the need for art. „Aus diesem entsetzlichen Existenz-Kampfe können nur die Einzelnen auftauchen, die nun sofort wieder durch die edeln Wahnbilder der künstlerischen Kultur beschäftigt werden, damit sie nur nicht zum praktischen Pessimismus kommen, den die Natur als die wahre Unnatur verabscheut.“<sup>71</sup> Nature abhors the practical pessimism at which an honest assessment of existence must arrive as it would lead to extinction in contradiction to the primary, existential need of nature. This would preclude any chance of aesthetic redemption. Thus nature also produces the drive for „die edeln Wahnbilder“ of art as a secondary drive to ensure the success of the first. These two drives provide the foundation of the concept of nature Nietzsche uses in these lectures. Once again, what is “unnatural,” or that which produces an *erlogene* culture appears to be that which keeps either drive from working towards aesthetic redemption.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> GS 764.

<sup>71</sup> “Out of this appalling fight for existence only the individuals can emerge who are now immediately occupied again by the noble delusions of the artistic culture just so that they do not come to practical pessimism, which nature abhors as the true non-nature.” GS 764-765.

<sup>72</sup> A more thorough discussion of Nietzsche's naturalism is found in van Tongeren, though it begins with Nietzsche's ideas in JGB.

In his *Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (written in 1873; hereafter *Wahrheit und Lüge*), Nietzsche argues that art is actually a natural element of *all* humans, claiming it is as natural to humans as building out of wax is to bees.<sup>73</sup> This claim is best understood through a brief examination of Nietzsche's theory of language and epistemology at the time. In *The Beginnings of Nietzsche's Theory of Language* Claudia Crawford painstakingly charts out the development of Nietzsche's theory of language from his reading of Kant and Schopenhauer in the 1860s to his formulation of it in *Wahrheit und Lüge*. She follows the way in which Nietzsche's epistemology (based originally in Kant's notion of the mechanisms of the understanding functioning analogously to the linguistic propositions of logic) is continually refined through his reading of Lange, Hartmann and Gerber.

She describes the following process. Like Kant, Nietzsche posits a disjunction between the thing-in-itself and the phenomena that represent it in the mind. Thus, as with Kant, the thing in itself is already unknown. The first appearances, delivered by the senses as nerve impulses, are taken up by an unconscious language (though not a logical one), which is the "unconscious instinct in human beings." From there, it can be taken up by conscious language, which he believes impoverishes the first, unconscious language. Unconscious language was itself already an abstraction from the nerve stimuli, which were a transformation of the thing-in-itself to begin with.<sup>74</sup> This is why, in *Wahrheit und Lüge*, Nietzsche describes how the original nerve stimulus (already a metaphor for reality) is translated by further metaphors until it arrives in conscious thought in language. This process results in a thought removed at least three times from what it

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<sup>73</sup> WL 882.

<sup>74</sup> See especially Crawford Prefix ix-x, 136-8, 177

claims to represent, and each removal is a „vollständiges Ueberspringen der Sphäre, mitten hinein in eine ganz andere und neue“!<sup>75</sup>

Nietzsche distances human thought another remove from its object in arguing that logic further abstracts from the metaphors of conscious language, offering the illusion of objectivity and obscuring the artistic origin of language and its concepts. This provides material for the construction of any science which Nietzsche describes beautifully as a conceptual-cathedral, organized and constructed out of the spider-webs of concepts, floating on a foundation of running water.<sup>76</sup> The artistic merit of such a feat is immediately obvious, as is the disastrous lack of anything that can be called objective “truth.” This will simply have to be provided by social convention and by forgetting the artistic process that produces all “truth.”<sup>77</sup>

Thus, all humans are intrinsically artistic by virtue of a conscious thinking produced by so many metaphorical layers. The inherently aesthetic nature of cognition, however, is not what Nietzsche is referring to in positing the human need for art beyond the need for survival. As Crawford notes, the artist, unlike all others, is the one who sees illusion *as* illusion.<sup>78</sup> In this way the artist is able to take pleasure in illusion, which most others mistake for reality and thereby miss its ludic potential. Nietzsche argues that such artists are no longer controlled by the relations of concepts but are the creators of those relations. Nietzsche’s artist escapes slavery to language and becomes its master:

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<sup>75</sup> “complete leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere.” WL 879.

<sup>76</sup> WL 881-884.

<sup>77</sup> WL 877-878.

<sup>78</sup> Crawford 173.

Jene ungeheure Gebälk und Bretterwerk der Begriffe, an das sich klammernd der bedürftige Mensch sich durch das Leben rettet, ist dem freigewordenen Intellekt nur ein Gerüst und ein Spielzeug für seine verwegensten Kunststücke: und wenn er es zerschlägt, durcheinanderwirft, ironisch wieder zusammensetzt, das Fremdeste paarend und das Nächste trennend, so offenbart er, dass jene Nothbehelfe der Bedürftigkeit nicht braucht, and dass er jetzt nicht von Begriffen sondern von Intuitionen geleitet wird.<sup>79</sup>

The artist resembles one of Nietzsche's favorite Heraclitian images, which he uses to describe the natural world of instincts which continually destroys and creates phenomena. The artist is like the child playing in the sand, creating and destroying as it pleases him.<sup>80</sup>

The artist also serves all humans in the creation of culture. Through the artist's playful mastery „kann sich günstigen Falls eine Kultur gestalten, und die Herrschaft der Kunst über das Leben sich gründen; jene Verstellung, jenes Verläugnen der Bedürftigkeit, jener Glanz der metaphorischen Anschauungen und überhaupt jene Unmittelbarkeit der Täuschung begleitet alle Aeusserungen eines solchen Lebens.“ It is still an illusion, but it is one purposely created to make life more beautiful and seductive as is seen in quotidian items of any culture such as the house, clothing and clay pot which now deny neediness and express „eine olympische Wolkenlosigkeit und gleichsam ein

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<sup>79</sup> “That vast assembly of beams and boards to which needy man clings, thereby saving himself on his journey through life, is used by the liberated intellect as a mere climbing frame and plaything on which to perform its most reckless tricks; and when it smashes this framework, jumbles it up and ironically re-assembles it, pairing the most unlike things and dividing those things which are closest to one another, it reveals the fact that it does not require those makeshift aids of neediness, and that it is now guided, not by concepts but by intuitions.” WL 888.

<sup>80</sup> See PW 758 and GT §24.



Spielen mit dem Ernste.“<sup>81</sup> Without such an aesthetic rendering of life, which seduces one to further existence, the brute need for survival alone would drive one to despair at the meaninglessness of life.

Plato did not posit any need for art to hide from humans a nihilistic dread about existence. He did, however, famously assign a very important role to noble lies. In the early stages of theorizing the ideal state, Socrates and his companions devise a *gennaion* lie to stabilize society. The myth that all of the citizens contain gold, silver, iron or bronze in their constitutions serves to keep all within their social standings as it convinces them of the naturalness of the caste system. This myth is certainly intended for the lowest and largest class as well as for the military and police forces. Whether Plato thinks it is necessary for the guardians is less clear. Socrates does say that the lie is meant “pseudomenous peisai malista men kai autous tous arkhontas”, but then goes on to say that “ei de mē, tēn allēn polin.”<sup>82</sup> He does not insist on the necessity of deceiving the rulers. It does seem quite unlikely that Plato would expect his philosopher-kings, for whom he will outline a rigorous education in order to raise them to communion with the Form of the Good itself, to remain under delusions. It is precisely their task to become free of error in order to best rule the city. Those who cannot handle the full truth, however, must be controlled by means of noble lies invented by the elite. This is not to prevent them from falling into a nihilistic paralysis but to keep them in the caste to which

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<sup>81</sup> “a culture can take shape, given favourable conditions, and the rule of art over life can be established; all the expressions of a life lived thus are accompanied by pretence, by the denial of neediness, by the radiance of metaphorical visions, and indeed generally by the immediacy of deception.... sublime happiness and Olympian cloudlessness and, as it were, a playing with earnest things.” WL 889.

<sup>82</sup> “to persuade optimally even the rulers if they are fooled, but if [they are] not [persuaded], [to persuade] the rest of the city.” *Respublica* II. 414c.1-2. For the myth see 414b-d.

the rulers assign them. Thus, Plato also requires a form of art to maintain his society by perpetuating a hierarchy within it.

Plato's caste system is predicated upon the idea of individual humans being naturally suited to particular tasks and aptitudes. This division of talents and labor is central to Plato's argument, as is the derivation of roles from natural needs. The division of labor and its foundation in the differing natures of humans and their various needs is, in fact, the very first principle laid down as the constitution of the ideal state is theorized.<sup>83</sup> Nietzsche is well aware of this, as he is aware of Plato's argument concerning the philosophers separated off as rulers, "hoti tois men prosēkei phusei haptesthai te philosophias hēgemoneuein t' en polei, tois d' allois mēte haptesthai akolouthein te tōi hēgoumenōi."<sup>84</sup> Just like Nietzsche, Plato also believes that those who are suited to pursuits beyond the banausic tasks of survival must be allowed to live separated from these tasks in order to pursue their higher functions in a focused manner.<sup>85</sup>

Nietzsche's arguments for a hierarchy of human aptitudes derived from natural needs and the division of labor it grounds are some of the strongest Platonic traits in his lectures on *Bildung*.<sup>86</sup> The notion of a hierarchy in human society is inherent to classicism and to the word "classicism" itself.<sup>87</sup> Winckelmann began the tradition of

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, ll. 369c-370c. The very next sentence after "Ithi dē, ēn d' egō, tōi logōi ex arkhēs poiōmen polin" is in fact "poiēsei de autēn, hōs eoiken, hē hēmetera khreia" ["Come now, I said, through our reasoning let us create a state from the beginning. And our needs, as it seems, will create it."] ll. 369c.9-10.

<sup>84</sup> "that they are fitted by nature both to engage in philosophy and to rule in a city, while the rest are not [fitted by nature] to engage [in philosophy but] to follow their leader." *Republica* ll. 474c.1-3.

<sup>85</sup> *Republica* ll. 496a-d.

<sup>86</sup> See Brobjer 251-252 for an argument that Nietzsche disagreed with the caste system in general and with its use specifically in the *Republic*.

<sup>87</sup> Porter *Dionysos* 256 and Emden 375.

eliding the elitism of classicism with his aesthetic image of Athens “as the prime example of a culture marked by social harmony and freedom, based on a primordial unity of art and nature.”<sup>88</sup> Such disavowal of elitism was certainly further compounded by the liberal, enlightenment ideas that permeated European thought as much as classicism itself did. Though Nietzsche’s insistence upon castes seems a crude departure, it is only the honest conclusion of the hidden logic of classicism.<sup>89</sup>

His elitism does not, however, confer dignity upon the few, as that would require the kind of Judaeo-Christian or Kantian grounding Nietzsche explicitly denies. He argues, rather, that the Greeks assign no absolute dignity to artists and that moderns should not either. Rather, the work Greek artists do in producing art „fällt für den Griechen ebenso sehr unter den unehrwürdigen Begriff der Arbeit, wie jedes banausische Handwerk.“ Just like the plant driven to push its roots through stone, if an artist felt „die zwingende Kraft des künstlerischen Triebes“ working in him, „dann muß er schaffen und sich jener Noth der Arbeit unterziehen.“ Though the Greek artist enjoyed „[d]as lustvolle Staunen über das Schöne“ it did not blind him to its becoming [*Werden*] „das ihm wie alles Werden in der Natur erschien, als eine gewaltige Noth, als ein Sichdrängen zum Dasein.“<sup>90</sup>

Thus, for Nietzsche, it is no disgrace to be made by society to labor for the necessities of existence just as it is no honor to be supported by society in order to

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<sup>88</sup> Emden 376.

<sup>89</sup> Porter *Philology* 256.

<sup>90</sup> “falls just as much for the Greek under the undignified concept of labor as every banausic trade.... the compelling power of the artistic drive ... then he *must* create and subject himself to the necessity of labor.... pleasing astonishment at the beautiful ... which appeared to him as all becoming in nature did, as a forceful need, as a forcing into existence.” GS 766-767.

produce art. A person in either role is simply the means of a drive. Dignity plays no role in such an economy. Similarly, when Glaucon, in the *Republic*, realizes that the rulers in the ideal state are compelled to live a less than ideal life, Socrates reminds him that the aim of the state is the welfare of the whole and not that of any specific group. The state and its natural arrangement do not exist to privilege any one class.<sup>91</sup> When Nietzsche makes claims about those suited by nature to receive *Bildung* and those who are not, he is only making an argument pertaining to the health of society as an organism. His primary concern is the creation of an artistic culture capable of aesthetic redemption. He is not concerned with conferring or denying privilege to any member of society but with the effective and natural functioning of the whole through the proper division of labor among its parts.

Unlike Plato's state, which would require three classes, Nietzsche's society, is only described as consisting of two strata, corresponding to the two needs humans are naturally driven to satisfy.<sup>92</sup> Where Plato saw the undisciplined citizens of a democracy denying and confounding their natural roles, Nietzsche sees among his contemporaries „zumeist nur Abnormitäten und Centauren“ composed of both „die Gier des Existenz-Kampfes und des Kunstbedürfnisses“<sup>93</sup> Thus, modernity produces individuals seeking to satisfy both needs, though Nietzsche believes that each individual is actually only driven

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<sup>91</sup> *Respublica* II. 520a-521a.

<sup>92</sup> Though he keeps these details necessarily sketchy, Nietzsche's state may actually require three or more classes. Those involved in the politics of state would seem to constitute a third class separate from both the *Gebildeten* and the laboring masses. See GS 710-711.

<sup>93</sup> “mostly only abnormalities and centaurs ... the greed of the fight for existence and that of the need for art.” GS 765.

to satisfy one. The simplification of roles for each individual would result in producing a harmonious whole capable of redemption.

## NATURE'S UNITY

Nietzsche does not at all believe that he is speaking of any system of cruelty or of one that exploits any person for the benefit of another. The modern notion of slavery gains its repugnant flavor from arguments that no one may be used as a means by another but that all ought to be treated as equal, Kantian ends. Nietzsche's notion of slavery does not even offend this modern notion, inasmuch as it does not promote the use of any human as the means to another human's happiness. All humans are, however, unavoidably used as the means of natural drives and none are ever ends. Plato does not consider the arrangement of his ideal state to allow one class to use members of any other as the means to their own happiness. He argues that it is only in the more degenerate polities that humans begin to use other humans as a means of their own happiness rather than all working towards a transcendent end as they would in his ideal state. In the oligarchy they "tous de prin phulattomenous hup' autōn hōs eleutherois philous te kai tropeas, doulōsamenoι tote perioikous te kai oiketas echontes."<sup>94</sup>

Nietzsche's formula for „das eigentliche Bildungsgeheimniß“ is that „zahllose Menschen scheinbar für sich, im Grunde nur, um einige wenige Menschen möglich zu machen, nach Bildung ringen, für die Bildung arbeiten.“<sup>95</sup> Though the artists and

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<sup>94</sup> “make slaves of those previously guarded by them as free friends and providers of nourishment, keeping them as subjects and servants.” *Respublica* II. 547c.1-3.

<sup>95</sup> “the actual secret of culture ... innumerable people, seemingly for themselves but basically only in order to make a few people possible, struggle for culture, work for culture.” ZB 665.

philosophers personally create the culture, even the slaves are really only working for *Bildung*. Ultimately, the slaves do not labor for the artists. Both slaves and artists are only laboring for the great and lasting works of art. Neither have any dignity in themselves or their labor. To have *Bildung* restricted to only an elite group is not a source of honor for those select few. As in Plato's state, the only form of fulfillment that can come to individuals comes when one performs one's own task: "houtō sumpasēs tēs poleōs auxanomenēs kai kalōs oikizomenēs eateon hopōs hekastois tois ethnesin hē phusis apodidōsi tou metalambanein eudaimonias."<sup>96</sup>

Though Nietzsche argues that through the surplus produced by the bottom class „soll jene bevorzugte Klasse dem Existenzkampfe entrückt werden, um nun eine neue Welt des Bedürfnisses zu erzeugen und zu befriedigen,“ this does not imply that this smaller class is to be removed from society.<sup>97</sup> All are to work together as one society, though it may be in different capacities. It is only within a unified society that provides a disciplined structure for *Bildung* that the gifted artists and thinkers can work towards culture, a society ordered according to natural needs, one of which is art. Though his explication of its structure likely owes more to Plato than to Winckelmann or Goethe, Nietzsche's view of the unified harmony of Greece, as opposed to the fractured nature of modernity, holds him close to modern German classicism.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> “thus, as the entire state grows and is well governed it must be allowed that nature renders to each class its share of happiness.” *Respublica* II. 421c.2-5.

<sup>97</sup> “that favored class shall be removed from the fight for existence in order to now beget and to satisfy a new world of necessity.” GS 767.

<sup>98</sup> See Siemens 399.

### Chapter 3

#### IDEAL *BILDUNG*

It is now necessary to lay out what can be said about the particulars of Nietzsche's program of *Bildung*. In contrast to Plato's description of the ideal process of education, Nietzsche's program remains rough and unfinished and is hinted at more than described. Plato gives a more detailed account including the subjects to be studied and the age at which they are to be pursued: geometry through play as a child, physical training as a teenager, mathematical sciences in the twenties, and dialectic starting at thirty leading to knowledge of the Good at fifty.<sup>99</sup>

Nietzsche excuses himself from the task of detailed description in his preface to the lectures. There he claims he is only climbing to a height to get a clear view. He is happy to leave the work of establishing the particulars to others „welche im Stande sind die ganze Bahn, von der Tiefe der Empirie aus bis hinauf zur Höhe der eigentlichen Kulturprobleme, und wieder von dort hinab in die Niederungen der dürrsten Reglements und der zierlichsten Tabellen zu durchmessen.“<sup>100</sup> Though Plato's description of

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<sup>99</sup> *Respublica* ll. 536b-540c. See also ll. 521c-522e, 526c-534d.

<sup>100</sup> “able to traverse the entire course from the depth of empiricism to the height of the actual cultural problems and down again into the depths of the driest rules and the most graceful schemas.” ZB 648.

education is more detailed, he similarly leaves many particulars concerning the laws of his state to be discovered by others.<sup>101</sup> Even if Nietzsche does not give a detailed description in his lectures on *Bildung*, he does still manage to give substantial information about the form of his program. These hints will now be discussed in the chronological order in which they would be carried out during the life of a child receiving Nietzsche's form of *Bildung*.

### SELECTION, DISCIPLINE AND NAIVETY

Clearly, the first question to be answered from a Platonic perspective concerning Nietzsche's proposed system is how children will be selected to receive true *Bildung*. Very few clues are ever offered. The first is given with the claim that the „kleine Anzahl von wahrhaft Gebildeten nicht einmal möglich [sei], wenn nicht eine große Masse, im Grunde gegen ihre Natur, und nur durch eine verlockende Täuschung bestimmt, sich mit der Bildung einließe.“<sup>102</sup> Nietzsche does believe, then, that most if not all children need to begin the process of *Bildung*, the vast majority seduced against their “nature.”<sup>103</sup> It seems that he also may think that some of the unqualified may still enter the *Gymnasien* who will later be weeded out, as will be seen in evidence considered below. As he never describes any criteria for further winnowing at the university level, one could assume that the universities will only be for the select few he considers naturally qualified for true

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<sup>101</sup> *Respublica* II. 425b-427c.

<sup>102</sup> “small number of truly cultured ones would never be possible, if a great host, fundamentally against its nature and determined only through an alluring deception, did not engage in the process of education.” ZB 665.

<sup>103</sup> Unlike Plato, Nietzsche never makes any arguments that women are to receive the same education or hold the same positions as men. One can not justifiably believe that he intends anything other than for all young *boys* to begin the process of *Bildung*.



*Bildung*. This determination would be made according to their need for three things: art, philosophy and the ancients, as will be discussed below.

Another important element to be discussed before the actual process of *Bildung* is laid out, is Nietzsche's strong need for discipline within the system. Of all the elements he mentions as being important to *Bildung*, he returns to the idea of discipline and its necessity most often. After his discussion of the sorry state of current university students suffering from academic freedom, Nietzsche's philosopher pronounces that

alle Bildung fängt mit dem Gegentheile alles dessen an, was man jetzt als akademische Freiheit preist, mit dem Gehorsam, mit der Unterordnung, mit der Zucht, mit der Dienstbarkeit. Und wie die großen Führer der Geführten bedürfen, so bedürfen die zu Führenden der Führer: hier herrscht in der Ordnung der Geister eine gegenseitige Prädisposition, ja eine Art von prästabiler Harmonie.<sup>104</sup>

Plato also stresses the importance of discipline within his educational system. The pupils in his state are only to learn material chosen by their masters in a prescribed manner. There is no room for any form of independent thought on the part of the students. The educational system is to be protected and “*toutou anthekteon tois epimelētais tēs poleōs, hopōs an autous mē lathēi diaphtharen alla para panta auto phulattōsi.*”<sup>105</sup> Like Plato, Nietzsche wants a structured educational system that makes the most of the latent, natural talents found in those to be educated. Nietzsche believes

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<sup>104</sup> “all education begins with the opposite of all of that which one now praises as academic freedom, with obedience, with subordination, with discipline, with subservience. And as the great leaders need those who are led, so do those to be led need a leader: a reciprocal predisposition rules here in the order of spirits, even a form of pre-established harmony.” ZB 750.

<sup>105</sup> “the governors of the state must cling to this so that it is not destroyed without their notice but so that they guard it from everything” *Respublica* II. 424b.2-4.

that, of those suited by nature to art and philosophy, „Hingebung an große Führer und begeistertes Nachwandeln auf der Bahn des Meisters gleichsam die natürlichen und nächsten Bedürfnisse zu sein pflegen.“

Some characters within the fictional dialog of the lectures, Nietzsche's fictional younger self, his friend, and the philosopher's companion, all believe that the gifted ones are those who do *not* need any institutions, and that „ihre Kraft sich zeigt, ohne solche Bildungskrücken, wie sie jeder Andere braucht gehen zu können.“<sup>106</sup> They adduce Lessing, Beethoven, Schiller and Goethe as examples of great individuals who did not appear with the help of any *Bildung* or specific social institutions. This argument draws sharp contempt from the philosopher. He firmly believes that such great artists and thinkers were all ruined by society and never reached their full potential. He asks the others,

Wer kann ausdenken, was diesen heroischen Männern zu erreichen bescheiden war, wenn jener wahre deutsche Geist in einer kräftigen Institution sein schützendes Dach über sie ausgebreitet hätte[....] Alle jene Männer sind zu Grunde gerichtet: und es gehört ein tollgewordener Glaube an die Vernünftigkeit alles Geschehenden dazu, um mit ihm eure Schuld entschuldigen zu wollen.<sup>107</sup>

He believes that classical German authors like Goethe and Lessing did not at all flourish in their unstructured isolation, but struggled to produce what little they could in a society that was choking rather than guiding them.

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<sup>106</sup> “their power shows itself without such crutches of *Bildung*, which every other needs to be able to go.” ZB 723.

<sup>107</sup> “Who can conceive what these men would have been granted to achieve if that true German spirit had spread its protective vault over them in one forceful institution? [...] All of these men were destroyed, and it is proper for a faith gone mad in the rationality of everything that happens to want to exculpate yourselves of your guilt with it.” ZB 725.

The question of education, for Plato, begins with the question of how young children are to be raised. He would begin to rear children with stories that exemplified correct morals.<sup>108</sup> Nietzsche has no interest in teaching what is good (as opposed to what is evil) through children's stories. As will be discussed below, he does argue that literature should be used to mold youths, though not the youngest children, for aesthetic rather than moral behavior. Nietzsche's concern for the youngest children is that a certain relationship to nature be preserved in those who will be future leaders. As noted, he believes that nature, with its tendency toward class stratification according to human needs, is already beginning to overturn the bourgeois world of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He suggests that if one wants to lead „einen jungen Menschen auf den rechten Bildungspfad“ one must protect the child's „naive zutrauensvolle, gleichsam persönlich-unmittelbare Verhältniß [...] zur Natur.“<sup>109</sup>

He is not simply speaking of the naivety that Schiller opposes to sentimentality in his conception of poetry. Though Nietzsche quite clearly does believe that the best art will be natural, his conception of what is natural for an artist requires disciplined education for its maturation. His artists are to be trained in a process that to Schiller could only seem to produce artificiality because of its rigorously taught and practiced nature. Nietzsche is closer here to Plato than to Schiller, as Plato believes that the natural character of his philosophers can and should be drawn out, strengthened and brought as close to perfection as possible through systematic education.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Respublica* 376e-377c. His use of literature in education will be returned to below.

<sup>109</sup> “a young person down the correct path of *Bildung* ... naïve, trustful, personally immediate, as it were, relationship [...] to nature.” ZB 715-716.

<sup>110</sup> See *Respublica*, ll. 375b-376d.

Nietzsche believes that a naïve relationship to nature must be protected for a child so that the child will hear the elements of nature speaking to him in their own tongues, and so that he will “gleichsam sich wie in zahllosen auseinandergeworfnen Reflexen und Spiegelungen, in einem bunten Strudel wechselnder Erscheinungen wiedererkennen; so wird er unbewußt das metaphysische Einssein aller Dinge an dem großen Gleichniß der Natur nachempfinden und zugleich an ihrer ewigen Beharrlichkeit und Nothwendigkeit sich selbst beruhigen.”<sup>111</sup> A child with a close relationship to nature is able to recognize himself as one of the myriad, transient appearances of the unity of being while being comforted in his identification with the eternally existent unity (the fantastic, Platonic description of the child’s relationship will be returned to later). This ability to have such a vision of and identify with the eternally existent will be critical to the redemptive ability of the art this child will produce in adulthood, as will be seen.

Those who are denied this relationship which Nietzsche calls “naïve” will come to treat nature much as Nietzsche’s fellow philologists treat antiquity — like a cadaver to be dissected and cataloged. What is lost through this scientific approach „ist nicht etwa eine poetische Phantasmagorie.“ It is rather „das instinktive wahre und einzige Verständniß der Natur: an dessen Stelle jetzt ein kluges Berechnen und Überlisten der Natur getreten ist.“ Those who are allowed to maintain their naïve relationship to nature specifically keep hold of the contemplative instincts of childhood and come to „einer Ruhe, Einheit,

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<sup>111</sup> “recognize himself in them as in, as it were, innumerable reflections and mirror images cast asunder, in a colorful whirlpool of changing appearances; thus he will unconsciously sympathize with the metaphysical, essential unity of all things in the great parable of nature, and he will simultaneously soothe himself in its eternal persistence and necessity.” ZB 716.

zu einem Zusammenhang und Einklang,“ and, thus, nature remains alive and whole for them.<sup>112</sup>

Nietzsche is most concerned with a child maintaining its contemplative wonder so that the child will always approach life as a mystery to be lived and not as a heap of facts to be known. One is besieged by „den ernstesten und schwierigsten Problemen“ in simply living an existence without any discernable value. For the future artist or philosopher, the earliest stage of a correct, protective form of *Bildung* will insure that when the child is correctly introduced to these problems he „zeitig in jenes nachhaltige philosophische Erstaunen gerathen wird, auf dem allein, als auf einem fruchtbaren Untergrunde, eine tiefere und edlere Bildung wachsen kann.“<sup>113</sup>

In his contemporary world, Nietzsche sees, in contrast, an appalling state of academic freedom where students having nothing to grasp at other than „die sogenannte ‚historische Bildung‘.“ This form of education is achieving nothing more than „das Unvernünftigste zur ‚Vernunft‘ zu bringen,“ and, thus, „gerade das Unvernünftige scheint jetzt allein ‚wirklich‘ d.h. wirkend zu sein, und diese Art von Wirklichkeit zur Erklärung der Geschichte bereit zu halten gilt als eigentliche ‚historische Bildung‘.“ Modern students are left with the approach to existence that gathers all its greatest contradictions

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<sup>112</sup> “is not some kind of poetic phantasmagoria ... the instinctive, true and only understanding of nature: whose place is taken by a clever calculation and outwitting of nature.... a peace, unity, connection and harmony.” ZB 716.

<sup>113</sup> “the most serious and difficult problems ... will come to that lasting state of philosophic astonishment early on upon which alone, as upon a fertile subsoil, a deep and nobler *Bildung* can grow.” ZB 741. On the “problem of life” see Silk and Stern 46, Porter *Dionysos* 19-20, 85 and Helm 25.

and parses them into tidy, organized tables. This is what „der philosophische Trieb unserer Jugend“ has transformed into.<sup>114</sup>

## MOTHER TONGUE

After children have had their naïve relationship to nature, i.e. their contemplative wonder towards life, protected and maintained, the first step in their formal education mentioned by Nietzsche is training in the mother tongue. His fictional philosopher claims that he investigates education in this discipline because German instruction is something that all have experienced.<sup>115</sup> The choice of this discipline is not so casual, though, as the native language is clearly crucial to Nietzsche as he reveals in two other passages. In one, his philosopher commands, „Nehmt eure Sprache ernst! Wer es hier nicht zu dem Gefühl einer heiligen Pflicht bringt, in dem ist auch nicht einmal der Keim für eine höhere Bildung vorhanden.“<sup>116</sup> Here we also see what appears to be Nietzsche's initial criterion for keeping or ejecting pupils as there is no hope for such a student. In the other passage he calls the mother-tongue „das allererste und nächste Objekt, an dem die wahre Bildung beginnt.“<sup>117</sup>

This is unsurprising as Nietzsche's goal is to create a culture productive of redemptive art like that of the Greeks. Nietzsche, however, is not an archeologist or an

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<sup>114</sup> “the so-called historical education.... bringing what is most irrational to ‘reason’.... precisely this irrationality now appears alone to be ‘actual,’ i.e. to be active, and to keep this manner of reality ready for the explanation of history obtains as proper ‘historical education’.... the philosophic drive of our youth” ZB 742.

<sup>115</sup> ZB 675.

<sup>116</sup> “Take your language seriously! Whoever does not achieve here a feeling of a sacred duty, in him the seed of a higher culture does not exist at all.” ZB 676.

<sup>117</sup> “the most primary and most immediate object, with which true education begins.” ZB 683.

art historian. He has not spent his time admiring the Apollo Belvedere at the Vatican. Nietzsche was oriented toward texts and not images and realia in his classicism.<sup>118</sup> He is a philologist who has spent his time among the texts of the Greeks. Despite even his love for music, Greek music remains unavailable to him, and it is clear that the Greek art-world he knows has been opened up to him almost exclusively during the previous two decades of his life in texts, in language. These Greeks, who are so alive and artistically successful for him, live and create art in language. If he wants his Germans to approach and learn from this model, he must want them to do so, to a great extent, in *language*.

The German teacher would, in the classical German authors „von Zeile zu Zeile zeigen müssen, wie sorgsam und streng jede Wendung zu nehmen ist, wenn man das rechte Kunstgefühl im Herzen und die volle Verständlichkeit alles dessen, was man schreibt, vor Augen hat.“ After carefully taking the pupils through examples from authors like Goethe and Schiller the teacher „wird immer und immer wieder seine Schüler nöthigen, denselbe Gedanken noch einmal und noch besser auszudrücken“ until this exercise produces „einen heiligen Schreck vor der Sprache“ in the less gifted and „eine edle Begeisterung“ in the gifted.<sup>119</sup>

This mastery of the language certainly does not serve to help a German pupil understand objective truth or reality. It gives him an intimate understanding of the very structure that produces “truth” and “reality” to prepare him for his emancipation from these illusions. This rigorous instruction prepares him for the kind of playful art where

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<sup>118</sup> Porter *Philology* 173 and Held 412.

<sup>119</sup> “have to show line by line how carefully and strictly every expression is to be made when one has the correct feeling for art in one’s heart and the entire comprehensibility of all of that which one writes in sight.... will continually compel his pupils to express the same thought again and even better ... a holy fear of language ... a noble enthusiasm.” ZB 676.

he will speak „in lauter verbotenen Metaphern und unerhörten Begriffsfügungen, um wenigstens durch Zertrümmern und Verhöhnern der alten Begriffsschranken dem Eindrücke der mächtigen gegenwärtigen Intuition schöpferisch zu entsprechen.“<sup>120</sup>

Does Nietzsche actually find a rigorous and methodical approach to the mastery of the mother tongue in the *Gymnasien*? Predictably, what he finds is a historical form of German instruction which dissects and kills: „wir [finden] überall die Ansätze zu einer gelehrt-historischen Behandlung der Muttersprache: d.h. man verfährt mit ihr als ob sie eine todte Sprache sei und als ob sie für die Gegenwart und Zukunft dieser Sprache keine Verpflichtung gäbe.“ Just as Homer’s value for life is lost once he is approached as a repository of earlier Indo-European linguistic features, the German language has no value once it becomes the victim of vivisection. In German education „auch der Lebendige Leib der Sprache [wird] ihren anatomischen Studien preisgegeben [...]: hier aber beginnt gerade die Bildung, daß man versteht das Lebendige als lebendig zu behandeln.“ Once again the modern tendency is not simply to deny life but to kill it. The task of the teacher of true *Bildung* is clear: „das überall her sich aufdrängende ‚historische Interesse‘ dort zu unterdrücken, wo vor allen Dingen richtig gehandelt, nicht erkannt werden muß.“<sup>121</sup>

This elevation of action over knowledge is to be the central feature of German instruction in Nietzsche’s system of education. „Unsere Muttersprache aber ist ein

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<sup>120</sup> “only in forbidden metaphors and unheard-of concepts so that, by at least demolishing and deriding the old conceptual barriers, he may do creative justice to the impression made on him by the mighty, present intuition.” WL 889.

<sup>121</sup> “we find everywhere the attempts at a scholarly-historical treatment of the mother tongue: i.e., one proceeds with it as if it were a dead language and as if there were no obligation to the present and future of the language.... the living body of the language is abandoned as well to its anatomical study; but education begins precisely here, that one learns to treat the living as living ... to suppress the ‘historical interest’ intruding from everywhere at the place where things must, above all, be correctly done, not known.” ZB 677.



Gebiet, auf dem der Schüler richtig handeln lernen muß: und ganz allein nach dieser praktischen Seite hin ist der deutsche Unterricht auf unsern Bildungsanstalten nothwendig.“<sup>122</sup> German is taught to produce a living mode of doing. Beautiful use of the mother-tongue is the first art all artists of the future will learn. An approach to learning in general which focuses much more on aesthetic action than on the construction and dissection of knowledge is also the critical difference between Nietzsche's approach and the historical approach of his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, respecting the living aspect of the modern German language requires discipline on the part of the teacher who must continually take the students through rigorous examinations of the classics and of the students' own formulations. Neither Picasso nor Scott Joplin would have been able to take their imaginative, playful flights of art without their rigorous, classical training that inculcated an intimate understanding of form. On the other hand, the historical approach to German appears to be „für den Lehrer bedeutend leichter und bequemer zu sein“ just as it „scheint einer weit geringeren Anlage, überhaupt einem niedrigeren Fluge seines gesammten Wollens und Strebens zu entsprechen.“ With such dominant pedagogical indolence, „das eigentlich Praktische, das zur Bildung gehörige Handeln, als das im Grunde Schwerere erntet die Blicke der Mißgunst und Geringschätzung.“<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> “Our mother tongue is, however, an area in which the pupil must learn to act correctly: and it is quite solely in this practical direction that German instruction at our educational institutions is necessary.” ZB 677.

<sup>123</sup> “significantly easier and more comfortable for the teacher ... appears to correspond to a meaner facility, even a lower flight of his collective willingness and ambition.... the actually practical, the doing belonging to *Bildung*, as what is fundamentally more difficult, reaps glances of resentment and contempt.” ZB 677-678.

A related task Nietzsche discusses in the ascent to *Bildung* is teaching pupils how to write correctly. This area of education requires strict discipline since „auf diesem Bereiche sich fast immer die begabtesten Schüler mit besonderer Lust tummeln.“ This fact should alert the teacher to precisely „wie gefährlich-anreizend gerade die hier gestellte Aufgabe sein mag.“ What may be stimulated and pose such a threat is the individuality of the pupil. This problem is compounded by the choice of subjects usually given to the pupil for composition. In the lowest grades, the „an und für sich unpädagogische Thema“ is assigned to the pupil to write a description of his own life and of his own development.<sup>124</sup>

This practice is as disastrous as destroying a child's philosophic wonder at nature. It wastes and perverts a precious and critical moment in the child's development:

Es ist die erste eigne Produktion; die noch unentwickelten Kräfte schießen zum ersten Male zu einer Krystallisation zusammen; das taumelnde Gefühl der geforderten Selbständigkeit umkleidet diese Erzeugnisse mit einem allerersten, nie wiederkehrenden berückenden Zauber. Alle Verwegenheiten der Natur sind aus ihrer tiefe hervorgerufen, alle Eitelkeiten, durch keine mächtigere Schranke zurückgehalten, dürfen zum ersten Male eine litterarische Form annehmen: der junge Mensch empfindet sich von jetzt ab als fertig geworden, als ein zum Sprechen, zum Mitsprechen befähigtes, ja aufgefordertes Wesen.

The pupil now considers his education to be complete long before he has ever even approached true *Bildung*. One needs only to read the compositions of the pupils to come

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<sup>124</sup> “the most gifted students almost always take to this area with particular delight ... how dangerously stimulating the task posed here may be.... essentially un-pedagogic subject.” ZB 678-679.

to the conviction that almost all suffer from this premature requirement to produce and form their own thoughts.<sup>125</sup>

Nietzsche gives a clear enough idea of his complaint with the approach to composition that actually exists, though he does not give many details of how students are to learn how to write well. All he offers is for the students to continually go over the examples left by the German classics, to constantly reformulate their own constructions, and to become intimately familiar with how the great writers used language in artistic practice. The place of these authors in Nietzsche's system will now be further examined.

## GERMAN CLASSICS

Nietzsche feels that what is produced by German educational institutions is dangerously far from the scholarship achieved by Goethe, Schiller, Lessing and Winckelmann.<sup>126</sup> Without a powerful *command* of (not *knowledge* of) the mother tongue „der natürliche fruchtbare Boden alle weiteren Bildungsbemühungen“ is lacking for the pupil. After the study of German, Nietzsche would have students ascend to a rigorous study of the texts of the classical German authors. He believes that it is only with a strictly developed feel and respect for the language that one is ready and able to appreciate „die Größe unserer Klassiker.“ One must „selbst aus Erfahrung wissen, wie schwer die Sprache ist.“ Any who want to follow these German classics „muß nach

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<sup>125</sup> “It is the first personal production; the still undeveloped powers come rushing together for the first time to a crystallization; the staggering feeling of the required autonomy covers these products with a first ever, never-returning, enchanting magic. Every boldness of nature is called forth from its depth; every vanity, not held back by a more powerful barrier, may for the first time take on a literary form; the youth perceives himself as having become complete from this point on, as being qualified to speak, to converse, even as a being invited to do so.” ZB 679.

<sup>126</sup> ZB 685.

langem Suchen und Ringen auf die Bahn gelangen, auf der unsre großen Dichter schritten, um nachzufühlen, wie leicht und schön sie auf ihr schritten und wie ungelenk oder gespreizt die Andern hinter ihnen dreinfolgen.“<sup>127</sup>

Plato also believed that literature, as part of *mousikē*, was critical to education. Where Nietzsche's study of literature is carried out with teenage pupils, Plato thinks that literature is most useful for small children. He is not at all concerned with developing an artistic sensibility or stylistic mode of action. Literature, for him, is useful for giving small children moral examples. Like Nietzsche, Plato discusses the classics of his society, such as Homer and Hesiod, within his system. He looks, however, at these authors first only in order to determine how to deal with problems they pose through problematic content, to determine what must be censored. Once this is determined, then the censorship and use of minor literature can be approached following the model established with the classics. He makes no argument that the classics are superior for his moral task, but simply uses them as a model just as he uses the city as a model to discover justice in the individual.<sup>128</sup> Though Plato does believe one can praise “polla [...] Homērou,” Homer's merit as an artist is clearly subordinate to Plato's need to present the youth with certain images of morality.<sup>129</sup>

Nietzsche is not concerned with indoctrinating an understanding of good and evil through a study of the classics as Plato is. His use of literature in education does not

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<sup>127</sup> “the natural and fruitful soil for all further efforts of *Bildung*.... the greatness of our classics ... from experience how heavy the language is ... must attain the path after long seeking and wrestling upon which our great poets trod in order to feel how lightly and beautifully they trod it and how clumsily or stiltedly the others followed behind them.” ZB 683-684.

<sup>128</sup> *Respublica* II. 377c-d.

<sup>129</sup> “many of the things in Homer.” *Respublica* I. 383a.7

follow the particulars of Plato's. Nietzsche's aesthetic aspirations, and their specifically linguistic nature, are quite central to his system while the moral benefits of Homer and Hesiod are ancillary to other pedagogic disciplines for Plato.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, both thinkers give literature an important position within their formative programs. Also, inasmuch as it is aimed at producing moral behavior, Plato's use of literature serves, like Nietzsche's, to foster a mode of doing more than just a mode of knowing. Plato is famously skeptical about the epistemological value of mimetic arts like literature, as they hold such a low place in his epistemology.

Another topic assigned to *Gymnasium* pupils for their compositions is the critique of the great writers. This is most offensive to Nietzsche. These inchoate pupils are, for him, in no position whatsoever to pass judgment on these artists.<sup>131</sup> The only relation they should have in regard to the German classics is one of submission and emulation. As Nietzsche believes that the only healthy and natural starting point for *Bildung* is a rigorous and graceful training in the use of the mother tongue, he also believes that pupils „Lehrmeister brauchen und sich ihrer Hut anvertrauen müssen.“ Nietzsche believes that men like Goethe and Lessing must also serve as the „vorbereitenden Führer und Mystagogen der klassischen Bildung, an deren Hand allein der richtige weg, der zum Alterthum führt, gefunden werden kann.“<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> See Brobjer 249 for a different reading of the lectures arguing that Nietzsche sees Plato focusing on the political and ethical at the expense of the aesthetic.

<sup>131</sup> ZB 678-679.

<sup>132</sup> “need those great leaders and masters and must entrust themselves to them.” (*Lehrmeister* are masters within the guild system.) “preparatory guides and mystagogues of classical *Bildung*, by whose hand alone the correct way which leads to antiquity can be found.” ZB 685-686.

## GERMAN SPIRIT

Before the ascent from the German classics to the ancients can be examined, something needs to be said about what Nietzsche calls *den deutschen Geist*. Though he clearly believes that the Greeks are culturally superior to the Germans, he does not believe that Germans should pretend to be Greeks. Nietzsche sees something very valuable about being German. At this point in his life, he has a much stronger faith in and attachment to collective institutions and groups than he later will. As will be seen, he also believes that aesthetic redemption can only happen for an ethnically (or perhaps only *linguistically*) unified group, a *Volk*.

This may be the result of his literary study of the Greeks, inasmuch as this study would be so strongly governed by the identification of an ethnic group with a language and the works written in it. The ideal of the unity of the Greeks is after all one of the original motivations that led to the creation of modern philology, and nationalistic impulses had been evident from the beginning in German classicism.<sup>133</sup> Nietzsche's nationalism is also certainly an effect of the general European nationalism at the time and especially of the heightened state of *German* nationalism after the creation of the German Reich in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war in which Nietzsche served as an orderly. His strong identification with the new Germany is also a function of his attachment to Wagner at this time whose nationalistic aspirations inspire Nietzsche in his own hopes.

Nowhere in the lectures, the five prefaces, or the *Geburt der Tragödie*, nor in the writings of the next year, such as *Nutzen und Nachtheil* and *Wahrheit und Lüge* does Nietzsche discuss the concept of *Rasse*. The first place Nietzsche does discuss it at

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<sup>133</sup> See Silk and Stern 299, Porter *Philology* 269, 273-286, and Schlechta 147.

length is in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* published in 1886. There, twenty-two separate passages use the term *Rasse* and discuss his theory of it. Gerd Schank summarizes the definition of race given there as “peoples living for a longer time in a specific environment and developing a ‘Charakter’ of their own in such environments, this Charakter ‘comprises certain physiologically based values appropriate to ensure life...’” This blood-less definition of race may have been in effect for Nietzsche at the time of his lectures as Schank surmises that it may go back to Nietzsche’s reading of Lange in the mid-60s.<sup>134</sup>

Nicholas Martin, also looking at Nietzsche’s writings from the mid-80s, states that “Nietzsche never tires of stressing the possibility that nobility, understood as an acquired rather than a biological characteristic, can be bred, educated and mobilized in the service of an—admittedly ill-defined—future.”<sup>135</sup> He also cites §11 of *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887) where Nietzsche says that there is hardly any blood tie or common idea between the current Germans and the old ones.<sup>136</sup> At the time of his lectures, Nietzsche is certainly much more enthusiastic (though not without reservations) about the new Germany and the nationalistic-cultural projects of people like Wagner. Still, it does not seem that he is simply arguing for some sort of racism determined by blood with his concept of the German Spirit.

As will be shown below, Nietzsche uses soil as a metaphor for the German Spirit.<sup>137</sup> This use of soil to represent the German Spirit ties it to the German language,

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<sup>134</sup> 237-238.

<sup>135</sup> 43.

<sup>136</sup> 47.

<sup>137</sup> See ZB 689, 691 and the discussion on German Hellenism below.

which, as noted above, he has already identified as „der natürliche fruchtbare Boden.“<sup>138</sup>

Perhaps one part of what this “German Spirit” embodies for Nietzsche is the particular mode of artistic doing that has happened in the German language. Goethe touched upon this intersection of language and ethnic identity in the proverbial line delivered by his *Baccalaureus* in *Faust*: „Im Deutschen lügt man, wenn man höflich ist.“<sup>139</sup> Due to the ambiguity of the adjective *deutsch*, *der deutsche Geist* could refer to “the spirit of the German people” as well as to “the spirit of the German *language*.” This would render his complaints about his contemporaries turning away from the German Spirit and those about how brazenly Germans neglect the careful use of their language much more related than they may first seem.

At any rate, at this point in his life Nietzsche does have strong nationalistic tendencies. Though Nietzsche had forfeited his German citizenship in his move to Switzerland in 1869, he had an exception made for him a year later to serve in the Franco-Prussian war “and as a German patriot he was allowed to volunteer in the capacity of a medical orderly.”<sup>140</sup> His position as one who sees something intrinsically good in the Germans tradition though he is living outside of Germany provides him a unique position. From Basel he can criticize the new German nation and its actual culture while invoking an latent potential evident in German history in which he still has

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<sup>138</sup> “the natural, fruitful soil.” ZB 683. See p. 43 (?) above.

<sup>139</sup> “In German you are lying when you are polite.” I. 6771.

<sup>140</sup> Silk and Stern 46.



some hope.<sup>141</sup> Being within the culture and outside of it, he can both criticize it and invoke its potential greatness.

Nietzsche also seems to subscribe to the hope that the linguistically and (recently) politically unified Germans are capable of a culture to rival that of the classical ideal of the unified Greeks. This will require, though, public institutions designed to that end. He believes that a „wahre Erneuerung und Reinigung des Gymnasiums wird nur aus einer tiefen und gewaltigen Erneuerung und Reinigung des deutschen Geistes hervorgehn.“<sup>142</sup> It is out of this spirit that institutions of *Bildung* will be „neugeboren,“ whereas the current spirit of German *Bildung* makes no contact with the German Spirit and is even fighting against it.<sup>143</sup> Nietzsche believes that the German Spirit is allied with the natural drives he posits and will overcome modernity.<sup>144</sup>

To understand the German Spirit, Nietzsche believes one must search under the rubble of the German present. It is not to be confused with the spirit of modernity, which is a „kosmopolitisches Aggregat“ and aping of French culture. French culture, Nietzsche argues, is more successful as it is genuine and natural, being grounded in its Roman roots. He deeply admires French culture.<sup>145</sup> This culture, with its Latin roots, is only unnatural when imitated by the Germans.<sup>146</sup> In *Der Geburt der Tragödie* he considers the German

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<sup>141</sup> See Taylor 23, 98.

<sup>142</sup> “true renewal and purification of the *Gymnasium* will only proceed out of a deep and powerful renewal of the German spirit.” ZB 691.

<sup>143</sup> “be born anew.” ZB 645, 709-710. See also Taylor 23, 26.

<sup>144</sup> ZB 710.

<sup>145</sup> For a discussion of Nietzsche admiration for seventeenth century French culture and his debt to French classicism for his notions of tragedy, see Weinberg. Heller offers an examination of Nietzsche’s debt to Rousseau and Voltaire.

<sup>146</sup> ZB 689-690.

military defeat of the French as a good omen, but not as the work that actually needs to be done. His nationalistic concerns are not military. Nietzsche is much more concerned with the „innerliche“ work that remains to be done.<sup>147</sup> The Germans must dig for their own roots, and these roots are as little Greek as they are Roman.

The German Spirit is seen in „der deutschen Reformation und in der deutschen Musik [und] in der ungeheuren Tapferkeit und Strenge der deutschen Philosophie und in der neuerdings erprobten Treue des deutschen Soldaten.“<sup>148</sup> Though Nietzsche does not explicitly describe a connection between the German Spirit and the German language in the lectures (he offers nothing more concrete than the shared usage of the metaphor of German soil), he does give some very clear examples of some of the elements that constitute the German Spirit: music, philosophy, the Reformation and the military. German music represents a cultural achievement springing from what Nietzsche considers to be a more purely Germanic source.

In *Der Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche credits German philosophy (specifically Kant and Schopenhauer) with the courageous move of *limiting* the sphere of knowledge and making room for, and necessitating, the return of redemptive, tragic art.<sup>149</sup> As for the Reformation, in 1874, Nietzsche claims that Luther would revolt against capitalism.<sup>150</sup> In 1882, he claims that the Germans could complete what Luther started by making

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<sup>147</sup> „inner“ §23.

<sup>148</sup> “the German Reformation and in German music [and] in the enormous valor and austerity of German philosophy and in the recently tried loyalty of the German soldier.” ZB 691.

<sup>149</sup> §18.

<sup>150</sup> Baeumer 149-150.

Germany a non-Christian nation.<sup>151</sup> Though it is not entirely clear, Luther and the Reformation seem to stand for an expression of German independence and the will to defy and resist cultural elements Nietzsche does not like. In the 60s, when Nietzsche is still a student, Luther was not an important historical figure for the young Nietzsche nor was the Reformation an important historical moment.<sup>152</sup> Nietzsche's new-found enthusiasm for Luther coincides with his friendship with Wagner and their shared plans for the improvement of German culture.<sup>153</sup> The end of Nietzsche's enthusiasm for Luther happens to coincide with the end of his enthusiasm for Wagner in the mid-70s.<sup>154</sup>

Thus Nietzsche's German Spirit is displayed in the qualities of German music, a philosophy that is prepared to limit the reach of knowledge, and a religious movement that is inherently revolutionary. The German Spirit may also coincide with the German language as the soil to which the Germans must return. In an investigation of a fragment from 1875, Quentin P. Taylor sees Nietzsche positing a pan- and philhellenic spirit in the thought of the Pre-Socratic philosophers that could have prevented Athenian and Spartan attempts at centralizing political power.<sup>155</sup> However committed Nietzsche may be to the idea of this philhellenic spirit, it is clearly a new variation on the classicist ideal of Greek unity which must be, in part, inspiring Nietzsche's own conceptualization of a unified German essence.

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<sup>151</sup> Moore 228.

<sup>152</sup> Large 117.

<sup>153</sup> Large 118 and Baeumer 148.

<sup>154</sup> Large 120.

<sup>155</sup> 43.

Plato does not argue that any sort of “Hellenic Spirit” is necessary for the maintenance or creation of the ideal state. He certainly does not posit one as any kind of metaphysical entity. Nietzsche’s “German Spirit” has no parallel in the *Republic*. Still, Plato does show a typically Greek racism in his discussion of warfare, where he says “phēmi gar to men Hellēnikon genos auto hautōi oikeion einai kai sungenes, tōi de barbarikōi othneion te kai allotrion.”<sup>156</sup> However, Plato’s racism is comfortably located within an uninterrupted ancient prejudice, whereas Nietzsche is caught up in the nationalism of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, which arises as a conspicuous movement partially in opposition to the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment.

Though the classics like Goethe, Schiller, Winckelmann and Lessing were all strong expressions of the German Spirit for Nietzsche, he believes that they lived in a time that was not ruled by it. Nietzsche is unquestionably right as he lives in a time of much greater nationalistic fervor. He believes these authors would have been even more productive had the true German Spirit been able to provide them with „einer kräftigen Institution.“ Instead the German Spirit remained „ohne eine solche Institution vereinzelt, zerbröckelt, entartet.“<sup>157</sup> This institution is not the German Reich, but an institution of *Bildung*. Nietzsche wants institutions of *Bildung* that are the embodiment of his German Spirit, as the redemption he hopes they will produce can only occur for a *Volk*.

Thus, Nietzsche believes Germans must first return to their native soil which Nietzsche locates in their language and in the German Spirit expressed in the German tradition. He would have the Germans create institutions infused with his German Spirit

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<sup>156</sup> “For I say that the Greek race is kin and related to its own, but to the barbarian it is foreign and strange.” *Respublica* II. 470c.1-3.

<sup>157</sup> “a powerful institution.... isolated, dispersed and degenerated without such any institution.” ZB 725.

in order to train the youth in it. After Nietzsche's pupils master the use of the mother-tongue through the study of the German classics, they are ready to approach the classics of antiquity.

## GERMAN HELLENISM

Nietzsche argues that the „Gefühl für das Hellenische“ when it is aroused, „sofort aggressiv wird und in einem unausgesetzten Kampfe gegen die angebliche Kultur der Gegenwart sich ausdrücken muß.“<sup>158</sup> The stimulation of this feeling would not only strengthen the tide turning against modern, barbaric culture, it would serve teachers by providing another criterion for separating future artists from the rest. This feeling is described as the rare result of both „des angestrengtesten Bildungskampfes“ and of a natural artistic gift.<sup>159</sup> Nietzsche thinks that most lack the gift and that, as German education stands, all lack the venue for this disciplined struggle necessary to gain the feeling for the Hellenic.

Actual teachers in the German *Gymnasien* hardly mention a relationship between the German classics and the ancient classics. They introduce their own versions of Homer and Sophocles to students without consulting or even mentioning authors like Winckelmann, Lessing, Goethe and Schiller and call it classical *Bildung*. Thus Nietzsche argues that the fault of modern teachers lies

in dem undeutschen, beinahe ausländischen oder kosmopolitischen Charakter  
dieser Bildungsbemühungen, in dem Glauben, daß es möglich sei, sich den

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<sup>158</sup> “feeling for the Hellenic ... immediately becomes aggressive and must express itself in a ceaseless fight against the ostensible culture of the present.” ZB 687.

<sup>159</sup> “the strained struggle for *Bildung*.” ZB 687.

heimischen Boden unter den Füßen fortzuziehn und dann noch fest stehen zu können, in dem Wahne, daß man in die entfremdete hellenische Welt durch Verläugnung des deutschen, überhaupt des nationalen Geistes gleichsam direkt und ohne Brücken hineinspringen könne.<sup>160</sup>

Indeed, Nietzsche sees the infusion of the schools with the German Spirit as the future activity „in welcher auch endlich die sogenannte classische Bildung wieder ihren natürlichen Boden und ihren einzigen Ausgangspunkt erhalten wird.“<sup>161</sup> Nietzsche believes that even German Hellenism needs to be *German* and not a simple imitation of another nation or denial of native character. Nietzsche aspires to remain among a German people and shape a German society using the Greeks only as *Vorbilder* of cultural success in order to create a timeless, genuinely German culture worthy of enduring admiration.<sup>162</sup>

Nevertheless, just as antiquity is too foreign and remote without the guidance of the German classics, the German Spirit is insufficient without the ancient example. It has never produced so natural and healthy a culture as that the Greeks enjoyed. Nietzsche believes that there is an intrinsic, metaphysical tie between what is German and what is Hellenic. What it is that connects the „innersten deutschen Wesen“ to the „griechischen Genius“ remains unexplained and appears to still be a mystery to Nietzsche

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<sup>160</sup> “in the un-German, almost foreign or cosmopolitan character of the endeavors for culture, in the faith that it is possible, to pull the native soil from under their feet and then still be able to stand firm, the delusion that one could jump into the alien, Hellenic world through the denial of the German spirit, the properly national spirit, as it were, directly without bridges.” ZB 689.

<sup>161</sup> “in which the so-called classical education will finally gain its natural soil and its only starting point.” ZB 691.

<sup>162</sup> *Vorbilder* can be translated as “examples.” The term literally denotes images that are held up before one in order to be emulated.

himself, as he describes it as „geheimnißvoll und schwer zu erfassen.“<sup>163</sup> In another place he declares that the German Spirit is „durch das edelste Bedürfniß an die Griechen gekettet,“ though he still offers no explanation of what this link of necessity may be.<sup>164</sup>

Eighteenth century poets like Klopstock and Voß did try to establish theories demonstrating an intimate relation between the German and Greek languages.<sup>165</sup> It does not seem, however, that Nietzsche, working after the thorough establishment and acceptance of the Proto-Indo-European hypothesis, would simply explain this mysterious tie by appealing to the common roots of the languages of the two nations. This would link French culture and other cultures to the Germans in the same bond of necessity and would compel him to accept a much more cosmopolitan argument.

Still, Nietzsche is not willing to simply argue that the Greeks provide a good model for the Germans, as they might for any other people. He needs, rather, to believe in a much more intimate and inexplicable tie that binds the two nations together. As he looks to the French as a more successful, modern culture, perhaps he needs to give the Germans a basis more admired than the ancient Teutons to compete with the Romans who nourish the roots of French art. He is, at any rate, certainly participating in the more general trend of utilizing Hellenism in a project of German nationalism that often invokes a special though inexplicable relation that ties the Germans to the Greeks.

However he may be trying to construe this mysterious link, Nietzsche is certain that it will not be until the German Spirit grasps „nach der hand dieses griechischen

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<sup>163</sup> “innermost German being ... Greek genius ... mysterious and hard to grasp.” ZB 691. For a lengthy, though ultimately unsatisfying discussion of the possible tie, see Taylor 111-124.

<sup>164</sup> “linked by the most noble necessity to the Greeks.” ZB 713.

<sup>165</sup> See Silk and Stern 6-7.

Genius, wie nach einer festen Stütze im Strome der Barberei [...] bevor nicht die Mühsam errungene Fernsicht in die griechische Heimat, an der Schiller und Göthe sich erlabten, zur Wallfahrtsstätte der besten und begabtesten Menschen geworden ist“ that the goal of a classical education at the *Gymnasium* can be achieved.<sup>166</sup> It should be noted that the only Greek homeland Nietzsche ever experiences, in which he could envision Goethe and Schiller finding refreshment, is the same one he has studied since his youth. It is a Greek homeland consisting of the words of surviving texts. As has been noted, Nietzsche is interested in the textual aspects of philology and gives little notice to archeology and artifacts.

One can only travel through this Greek homeland as one moves through language. When Nietzsche suggests that a student will be helped by the classical German authors to a view of that homeland, he means that they must read the German texts of these authors to understand how to approach the Greek texts of the ancient classics. Thus, Nietzsche lays such stress on the pupils' refinement of their feel for how these German authors expressed their lives *in language* as it will prepare them to approach the written world of the Greeks.

Christian Emden finds Nietzsche's approach to the Greek through the German classicists puzzling.<sup>167</sup> Quentin Taylor lays out an argument that the value of this approach might be mimetic.<sup>168</sup> It seems, however, that Nietzsche's aim is not to have students who can imitate the German classicists (or even, ultimately, the Greeks). As

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<sup>166</sup> “at the hand of the Greek genius as at a secure post in the flood of barbarism,...not before the painstakingly achieved, long-distance view into the Greek homeland, in which Schiller and Goethe refreshed themselves, has become the place of pilgrimage of the best and most gifted people.” ZB 691.

<sup>167</sup> 379.

<sup>168</sup> 146-147.



with the rigorous studies in the mother tongue, the purpose of this approach is to develop an understanding of language in the pupils, though in this case they are moving from the simple mechanics to the study of various possible, artistic constructions within language. As artists of the future, they will not simply imitate the greats of their own nation or of any other. The passages on language from *Wahrheit und Lüge* examined above show that, for Nietzsche, an artist working in language is defined by his capacity to reconfigure the concepts and elements of language. Returning to the example of an artist like Scott Joplin, it is certain that, as a student, he has to practice and study pieces like Chopin's études for countless hours, if not for years. The aim, however, is not the ability to simply imitate Chopin, but to develop such a fine feel for the forms of music that Joplin can capably strike out into uncharted, inventive territory.<sup>169</sup>

Since the only training Nietzsche is laying out for his artists of the future is one in language, and since the art-world with which he spends the most time is literary, it would seem that he is most likely envisioning literary artists of the future in the approach he is prescribing.<sup>170</sup> Therefore, another look at Nietzsche's language theories may offer some understanding of his curious proposal to have pupils study the German classicists on their way to the Greeks.

Recalling the image of the cathedral of spider webs floating on a foundation of moving water, which is Nietzsche's image of a body of knowledge constructed out of the

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<sup>169</sup> Alexander Nehemas similarly argues that Nietzsche does not want disciples that will imitate him but will from him how to produce "a creation which, making use of everything that properly belongs to oneself, would also be perfectly one's own—something which is no longer an imitation." 8.

<sup>170</sup> Though Nietzsche has a great love for music, composes his own works, and gives music such a central role in *Der Geburt der Tragödie*, music plays no role in his lectures on *Bildung*. It would also seem, given what he writes in the lectures and in *Wahrheit und Lüge*, that his own thinking about producing artists of the future has been most thorough in regard to writers. The one artist about whose development he is likely most concerned is *Nietzsche* the writer.

concepts of language, it is already clear what a central role Nietzsche gives to conscious language. Though he does not say so much explicitly in *Wahrheit und Lüge*, Crawford demonstrates how Nietzsche believes that it is specifically grammar that makes philosophical thinking possible.<sup>171</sup> It is grammar that takes the disparate concepts and connects them in meaningful ways, producing the architecture of conscious thought. The best way, therefore, to understand *how* Goethe thought about the Greeks is to develop an intimate understanding of his language concerning them. This is not merely to say that this is how one comes to understand the truth value of his propositions about the Greeks. It is how one experiences the conscious thought processes that produce those propositions, and the linguistic artistry that is distinct from, but related to the propositions. That is why the students must spend so much time developing their feel for the German language before turning to the ideas of the German classicists.

A pupil with a refined appreciation and feel for the German language is able to come to an understanding about *how* Goethe, Winckelmann, Schiller and Lessing thought about the Greeks. An understanding of the collective writings of the classicists also helps the pupil to understand how the suprasubjective German Spirit manifests itself in those writings. Nietzsche is not at all saying that one will get closer to a correct knowledge of the Greeks because the classicists somehow had a more correct knowledge. He is merely saying that one will gain a feel for how these writers lived their interaction with and inspiration from the Greek writers in the way that they write about them. Compared to the professional philologists, the literary classicists certainly, Nietzsche thinks, offer a far more artistically fruitful expression of an interaction with antiquity, regardless of how far from the “truth” they may have been.

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<sup>171</sup> 41-42.

As the epistemology laid out in *Wahrheit und Lüge* makes clear, Nietzsche has no faith that conscious language produces perfectly correct explanations of the way things really are, whether those things are facts about nature or facts about an ancient people. Conscious language consists of nothing more than metaphors, which only interpret other metaphors of other metaphors. Language does not take one to the thing-in-itself of a body in space or a body of literature. But it can be a realm of aesthetic play that embodies and expresses one's relation to existence. Alexander Nehamas offers a convincing argument that Nietzsche sees human statements about the world as nothing more binding than interpretations, and shows how these are interpretations understood in a *literary* sense.<sup>172</sup> To save Nietzsche from charges of relativism, Nehamas gives a convincing argument that all interpretations are not equal. All the same, even the best interpretation remains only a reading of existence.

What is important for a pupil reading Goethe on the Greeks is not to come any closer epistemologically to the ancient Greeks, but to experience how Goethe lived artistically in relation to his interpretation of the Greeks through language. Even then the pupil is not meant to gain the correct knowledge of Goethe's views on the Greeks, but to develop his own interpretation by means of Goethe's interpretation.<sup>173</sup> All of which is to say, a reading of the classicists is not meant to provide a pupil with the tools to gain a correct knowledge of antiquity, but to develop in him an artistically linguistic sense of the linguistically artistic inspiration the classicists found in the ancients. As Nietzsche writes in *Wahrheit und Lüge*, there is no direct epistemological relation of subject to object,

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<sup>172</sup> 3, 29.

<sup>173</sup> See Siemens 403 for a discussion of how Nietzsche takes up terms from Goethe's classicism and radicalizes them in his own engagement with the ancients.

„sondern höchstens ein ä s t h e t i s c h e s Verhalten, ich meine eine andeutende Uebertragung, eine nachstammelnde Uebersetzung in eine ganz fremde Sprache. Wozu es aber jedenfalls einer frei dichtenden und frei erfindenden Mittel-Sphäre und Mittelkraft bedarf.“<sup>174</sup>

Silk and Stern point out that, Goethe “divined” that the Greeks “were attuned to experience intense feeling in the spirit of *an aesthetic game*.”<sup>175</sup> Was his reading of the Greeks not instrumental in nurturing Goethe’s own sensibility for experiencing life as an aesthetic game? Studying Goethe’s thoughts on the Greeks certainly illuminates his own artistic approach to life. In Nietzsche’s *Encyclopaedie der klassischen Philologie* (hereafter *Encyclopaedie*), notes from a course given at Basel in 1871, he similarly encourages his students to study “Winckelmann, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe” in order to feel what antiquity means for moderns.<sup>176</sup>

Further, just as a study of the modern classicists provides an approach to antiquity, the study of antiquity provides a unique perspective of modernity. In the *Encyclopaedie* Nietzsche specifically argues that a student should read the classics in order to make „ihm die Gegenwart anschaulich.“ In order to come to this experience, the pupil must study grammar „um in den antiken Ausdruck hinein zuleben.“ As he also says that, for the student of antiquity, „Hineinleben ist die Aufgabe.“<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> “but at most an *aesthetic* way of relating, by which I mean an allusive transference, a stammering translation into a quite different language. For which purpose a middle sphere and mediating force is certainly required which can freely invent and freely create poetry.” WL 884.

<sup>175</sup> 85.

<sup>176</sup> 368.

<sup>177</sup> “the present alive for him.... in order to experience [lit. “live into”] the antique manner of expression.... The task is to live in [it].” 345. *Hineinleben* is almost impossible to translate. It consists of the adverb

To live in the worlds of Goethe, Schiller, Homer or Pindar through reading their words gives one a valuable perspective from which one can understand the present just as it provides understanding of the artistic, life-expressing potential of language. The study of the ancients leads one back to see the present in all of its potential and deficiency.<sup>178</sup> It is in this manner that the feeling for the Hellenic rouses one to the fight against modern, barbarian culture in the hopes of a greater, prospective culture.

Nietzsche does not believe that Winckelmann, Goethe and Schiller are the best guides in an objective study of the Greeks. *Die Geburt der Tragödie* famously opposes an interpretation of the Greek art-world consisting of a serene surface covering a turbulent depth to Winckelmann's foundational formulation of Greek beauty as a serene depth grounding a disturbed exterior. It is commonly held that *Die Geburt der Tragödie* represents a historical break from the classicist aesthetics of the Weimar generation. Though James I. Porter does a thorough job of revealing all of the problems with the prejudice, it is Nietzsche himself who proclaims that Winckelmann, Goethe and Schiller misunderstood the Greeks and that his book on tragedy is meant to set the records straight.<sup>179</sup>

Porter does clearly show that, as much as Nietzsche may be in line with the classicists, he is also very much at variance with them, and that he consciously cites his disagreement with them in his notes for the *Encyclopaedia*.<sup>180</sup> In fact Porter spends an

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which shows a destination for a movement (*hin*), the preposition meaning "in" (*ein*), and the infinitive for "to live" (*leben*).

<sup>178</sup> See Emden 380, 385-386, Porter *Homer* 21-22, Acompora 89-91, and Taylor 138-141.

<sup>179</sup> Porter *Philology* 249-259; GT §20.

<sup>180</sup> *Philology* 184. See also n. 173 above.

entire chapter showing how the purpose of the *Encyclopaedie* course (including the study of the modern classicists) is to give Nietzsche's modern students a very clear view of just how impossibly distant they (and their classicist predecessors) really are from the ancients.<sup>181</sup> This is why Nietzsche calls the studies of the ancients „unzeitgemäss“ in *Nutzen und Nachtheil*.<sup>182</sup>

At the same time, Nietzsche is still attached in many ways to much of what the classicists thought, and Goethe will remain a hero throughout his life.<sup>183</sup> As noted, one of the ways in which he values them most is that, in light of the academic alternatives, they offer the Germans the best model for an artistic and enthusiastic literary engagement with the Greeks despite any disagreements of interpretation Nietzsche may have with them. They must be the best mystagogues for the German-speaking artists of the future as they are the only options available. In Nietzsche's ideal scheme, pupils who have mastered the German language, intimately experienced the literary explorations of the Greeks carried out by the German classicists, and developed a very high proficiency in, and nuanced sense for, Latin and Greek would be ready to move on to the study of the ancients themselves—or at least their literature—in their preparation as artists of the future.

Unfortunately, the actual *Gymnasium* pupils and university students found in Germany have only been trained to live and think in all independence from their teachers and any traditions of the past. The philosopher in Nietzsche's lectures invites his

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<sup>181</sup> *Philology* ch. 4.

<sup>182</sup> 247.

<sup>183</sup> For Nietzsche's relation to Weimar Classicism in general, see Bishop and Stephenson. For his relation to Goethe see Ulfers and Cohen, Bishop, and Siemens. For his relation to Schiller see Rehder.

fictional companions to judge the modern, academically free student by three criteria: „einmal an seinem Bedürfniß zur Philosophie, sodann an seinem Instinkte für Künste und endlich an dem griechischen und römischen Althertum.“<sup>184</sup> After the pupils capable of it have undergone rigorous training at the *Gymnasium*, these three criteria would seem to constitute the final three criteria for winnowing the unqualified from the process of *Bildung*.

Regarding the need for philosophy, it has already been discussed how Nietzsche believes that young children must have their naïve relationship to nature, their philosophic wonder at the world, preserved. It has also been discussed how an historical assessment has taken the place „einer tiefsinnigen Ausdeutung der ewig gleichen Probleme“ consisting merely of „was der und jener Philosoph gedacht habe oder nicht oder ob die und jene Schrift ihm mit Recht zuzuschreiben sei oder gar ob diese oder jene Lesart den Vorzug verdiene.“<sup>185</sup>

The second criterion, the instinct for art, is what separates one at the primary levels of Nietzsche's nature from those whose instincts suit them only to a life of banausic labor. It has been shown how this need is ruined by modern education and produces many of the frustrated denizens of the world of journalism. Nietzsche sees the university as having nothing to do with art. „Von einem künstlerischen Denken, Lernen, Streben Vergleichen ist hier nicht einmal eine Andeutung zu finden, und gar von einem

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<sup>184</sup> “first, by his need for philosophy, as then by his instinct for art, and finally by Greek and Roman antiquity.” ZB 741.

<sup>185</sup> “of a profound interpretation of the eternally identical problems ... what this or that philosopher thought or not, whether this or that text is correctly ascribed to him, or even whether this or that version of a text deserves preference.” ZB 742.

Votum der Universität zur Förderung der wichtigsten nationalen Kunstpläne wird  
Niemand im Ernste reden mögen....“<sup>186</sup>

„Ohne Philosophie, ohne Kunst leben unsere akademischen ‚Selbständigen‘  
heran,“ Nietzsche laments, although precisely philosophy and art are the necessary  
prerequisites for „das Gefühl für das Hellenische“ For moderns in whom the artistic gift  
has atrophied while the need for philosophy has long since been extirpated, the ancients  
remain enthroned „in schwer zugänglicher Einsamkeit und majestätischer Entfremdung.“  
In Nietzsche’s eyes, the modern German student no longer has any reason „eine Neigung  
zu erheucheln“ towards the ancients.<sup>187</sup> Without the need for philosophy, the instinct for  
art, or a feeling for the ancients, Nietzsche asks, „an welcher Leiter wollt ihr noch zur  
Bildung emporsteigen? Denn bei dem Versuche, die Leiter ohne jene Hülfe zu  
erklimmen, möchte euch eure Gelehrsamkeit — das müßt ihr euch schon sagen lassen —  
veilmehrer als eine unbehülfliche Last auf dem Nacken sitzen als daß sie euch beflügelte  
und emporzöge.“<sup>188</sup>

Nietzsche does not doubt that the *Gymnasium* was originally intended as the  
institution created to aid in the ascent to *Bildung*. It seems clear to him that „wenigstens  
als vorbereitende Veranstaltung“ institutions of secondary education took „in den  
wunderbaren, tiefsinnig erregten Zeiten der Reformation die ersten kühnen Schritte auf

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<sup>186</sup> “Not a single indication of an artistic thinking, learning, striving or comparing is to be found, and nobody would care to speak seriously at all of a vote from the university for the promotion of the most important national artistic plans....” ZB 743.

<sup>187</sup> “Our academic ‘independents’ live on without philosophy, without art.... in hardly approachable solitude and majestic alienation.... reason to feign an inclination.” ZB 743.

<sup>188</sup> “which ladder do you want to still climb to culture? For with the attempt to climb the ladder without this help, your scholarship would, this much you would have to admit, rest much more as an unhelpful burden around your neck than it would give you wings and lift you up.” ZB 744.



einer solchen Bahn.“ Something of this dissipated need again emerged in the time of Goethe and Schiller „gleichsam als ein Keim jener Schwinge, von der Plato in *Phaedrus* redet und welche die Seele, bei jeder berührung mit dem Schönen, beflügelt und emporträgt — nach dem Reiche der unwandelbaren reinen eingestalten Urbilder der Dinge.“<sup>189</sup> Nietzsche’s use of Platonic imagery explains his earlier use of the image of the wing that simply described moving German pupils towards antiquity. This wing that began to sprout in the times of Weimar classicism will, Nietzsche hopes, come to full strength and bear the German people aloft to their aesthetic redemption.

Nietzsche’s descriptions of his program as an ascent from German studies to the Greeks to aesthetic redemption also shows some similarities to Plato’s discussion of the Forms found in the Similes of the Divided Line (at the end of Book VI) and of the Cave (at the beginning of Book VII). Nietzsche’s program, as he explains it, is entirely focused on a form of linguistic praxis as it begins with the development of a beautiful facility in the mother tongue and ascends through a study of classical German texts to the study of classical Greek texts. Unlike Plato’s initiates, Nietzsche’s artist of the future is not perfecting his knowledge through moving ever closer to the epistemic and ontological source of everything. Nietzsche’s artist is perfecting and honing an artistic sense for language in order to induce Genius to inspire works of art capable of metaphysical redemption through the masterful and playful language developed by the artist. Epistemology and ontology are replaced by aesthetics although, in his discussion of the young child’s vision of unity with nature, Nietzsche postulates a metaphysics at least as

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<sup>189</sup> “at least as a preparatory function ... the first, brave steps on such a course in the wonderful, profoundly exited times of the Reformation.... like the sprouting, so to speak, of that wing of which Plato speaks in the *Phaedrus* and which inspires and bears aloft the soul at each contact with the Beautiful towards the realm of the immutable, pure, form-giving archetypes of things.” ZB 730.

mystical as Plato's. As will be seen below, Nietzsche's prescribed ascent through the German and Greek languages will lead to an even more Platonic end where the Greeks will act as the true Forms of culture leading to the epiphany of Genius.

## Chapter 4

### WHY THE GREEKS?

Why are the Greeks the final stage of ascent in Nietzsche's educational plan on the way to aesthetic redemption? Why is it so important to Nietzsche that his process of *Bildung* leads to them? He offers no explicit answers to this question in the lectures. Certainly, he could be simply counting on the prejudices of an audience which has already been raised to hold the ancients as nothing other than the categorical imperative of culture, even if for reasons different from Nietzsche's. He certainly would not need to spend any time defending to his colleagues the thesis that the ancients represent the cultural ideal. It is also quite possible that his enthusiasm for the Greeks is in large part the result of his education and rearing in a time and place that held the Greeks in such high regard. It does not seem that Nietzsche, however, intends for his audience to understand his particular vision of the value of the Greeks based only on what they have learned within the modern system of *Bildung*.

As has been argued, it seems that Nietzsche values an education in the classics as a means of developing a feel for the use of language in order to express life artistically through language. That appears to be the ostensible goal of the educational course he

describes in the lectures. Further, in his discussion of his theory of language and in his explanation of the way in which an artist can play with language in *Wahrheit und Lüge*, Nietzsche repeatedly cites the Greeks as exemplars of this ludic approach to life in language.<sup>190</sup> Taking a broader look that encompasses other writing contemporary to the lectures, it also appears that Nietzsche sees a study of the Greeks as necessary for understanding just how far modern Germans stand from the possibility of a redemptive aesthetic culture.

Another lesson Nietzsche offers within the lectures of what can be learned from the ancients is not explicitly presented in a bold pronouncement. It is encountered as the pervasive refrain. Nietzsche offers an example of a state organized according to his notion of nature, which, he believes, will be most likely to produce a great culture. The ancients he presents had no problem with slavery, and all of their cultural productions, which Nietzsche so admires, were all made possible by the employment of the vast majority in daily labor in order to free the few to create culture. If German students can come to understand this aspect of the Greeks in what Nietzsche considers a truly Greek manner, then, he hopes, their feel for the Hellenic will impel them to overturn their present culture. Though he does not comment on Athenian democracy, likely sees it as a degeneration of the ideal as Plato did. Nietzsche certainly does not believe that any rigorously fostered student of *Bildung* who has attained this “Gefühl für das Hellenische” could look upon liberal politics and bourgeois culture with anything but contempt.

Nietzsche wants the Germans to gain from the Greeks a clear picture and feeling for a culture stratified by what he views as natural drives, a culture that believes in and maintains an aristocratic hierarchy determined by the gifts and aptitudes of these natural

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<sup>190</sup> 887-889.

drives. Their experience with the Greeks will help them to see their own distance from this arrangement Nietzsche finds so in harmony with nature. In this way, he believes, the Germans will redeem themselves as a people through their art.

## DRIVE FOR DESTRUCTION

In his unpublished preface entitled “*Homer’s Wettkampf*” [“Homer’s Contest”] Nietzsche gives a more detailed description of how he understands the Greek state and why he finds it so superior to his own. He also explains another way in which Greek society affirmed a frightening, natural drive rather than fighting it. He believes that the affirmation of this drive would greatly benefit and correct modern German society and can be best understood by engaging the Greeks through their literature. Nietzsche is describing „einen Zug von Grausamkeit, von tigerartiger Vernichtungslust.“ As an example of this drive for destruction, he describes how after the Corcyraean revolution the victors acted according to „dem R e c h t e des Krieges“ in executing all of the men and selling all of the women and children into slavery. Nietzsche believes that moderns can see „in der Sanktion eines solchen Rechtes, daß der Grieche ein volles Ausströmenlassen seines Hasses als ernste Nothwendigkeit erachtete.“ In such moments moderns can also see how „die zusammengedrängte und geschwollene empfindung“ alleviated itself and how „der Tiger schnellte hervor, eine wollüstige Grausamkeit blickte aus seinem fürchterlichen Auge.“<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> “a trait of gruesomeness, of a tiger-like pleasure in destruction.... the *right* of war ... the sanction of such a right that the Greek considered a full allowing of the outpouring of his hatred as a serious necessity ... the compacted and swollen feeling ... the tiger sped forth; a lascivious gruesomeness glanced out of his fearsome eye.” HW 783-784.

This leads Nietzsche to two questions about Greek art. The first is: „Warum mußte der griechische Bildhauer immer wieder Krieg und Kämpfe in zahllosen Wiederholungen ausprägen, ausgereckte Menschenleiber, deren Sehnen vom Hasse gespannt sind oder vom Übermuthe des Triumphes, sich krümmende Verwundete, ausröchelnde Sterbende?“ The second is: why did all of the Greeks exult in „den Kampfbildern der Ilias?“<sup>192</sup>

It is after these question that Nietzsche famously comments that we moderns „schaudern würden“ if we actually understood the Greeks in a truly Greek manner. Before offering any answer to these questions, he digs deeper with the question: „Was aber liegt, als der Geburtsschooß alles Hellenischen, h i n t e r der homerischen Welt?“ He pauses to describe how, by the Homeric world, we are „durch die außerordentliche künstlerische Bestimmtheit, Ruhe und Reinheit der Linien über die rein stoffliche Verschmelzung hinweggehoben.“ This world’s „Farben erscheinen, durch eine künstlerische Täuschung, lichter, milder, wärmer, ihre Menschen, in dieser farbigen warmen Beleuchtung, besser und sympatischer.“ Then he asks, „wohin schauen wir, wenn wir, von den Hand Homer’s nicht mehr geleitet und geschützt, rückwärts, in die vorhomerische Welt hinein schreiten?“<sup>193</sup>

He says that we look into a world like the one Hesiod describes, but with thicker and darker air without any alleviation or purification, combined with „der finsternen

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<sup>192</sup> “Why did the Greek sculptor always have to express war and battles in countless representations: stretched out human bodies, the sinews of which are tense with hatred or with the exuberance of triumph, the wounded writhing, the dying gasping? ... the images of battle in the Iliad?” HW 784.

<sup>193</sup> “would shudder.... What lies, as the womb of all that is Hellenic, behind the Homeric world? ... carried away beyond the purely material concretion through the extraordinary, artistic distinctness and the peace and purity of the lines ... colors appear lighter, milder, and warmer through an artistic deception, its people appear better and more sympathetic in this colorful, warm illumination ... where do we look, however, when we, no longer led and protected by Homer’s hand, step further back into the pre-Homeric world?” HW 784-785.

Wollüstigkeit der Etrusker.“ He describes it simply as „Nacht und Grauen.“ He believes such a reality would „eine Mythenwelt e r p r e s s e n , in der Uranos Kronos und Zeus und die Titanenkämpfe wie eine Erleichterung dünken müßten.“ In this „brütenden Atmosphäre das Heil, die Rettung, die Grausamkeit des Sieges ist die Spitze des Lebensjubels.“ Thus, just as Nietzsche thinks that „in Wahrheit vom M o r d e und der Mordsühne aus der Begriff des griechischen Rechtes entwickelt hat, so nimmt auch die edlere Kultur ihren ersten Siegeskranz vom Altar der Mordsühne.“<sup>194</sup>

The incubative womb of Nietzsche's pre-Homeric world of horror gives birth to both the beautiful, artistic glorification of conflict as well as to the social order that controls it without seeking to eliminate it. This arrangement of his metaphysics is truer to Schopenhauer than his contention in *Der Geburt der Tragödie* that Apollo and Dionysos act as equal parents in birthing tragedy. Here the Dionysian gives birth to the Apollinian. The chaotic, destructive womb is productive of and necessary for the world of order and clarity that justifies it. A view of this world of conflict and horror led a few „zum Ekel am Dasein.“ As opposed to this reactive resignation, Nietzsche believes that the truly „hellenische Genius hatte noch eine andere Antwort“ ready for the question of the value of existence, which it gives „in der ganzen Breite der griechischen Geschichte.“<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> “the dark lust of the Etruscan.... night and horror.... extort a mythological world in which Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus, and the battles of the Titans would have to seem like a relief ... incubative atmosphere the salvation, the deliverance, the gruesomeness of victory is the pinnacle of life's jubilation.... the concept of Greek justice developed out of the truth of *murder* and the expiation of murder, so does the more noble culture also take its first wreath of victory from the altar of the expiation of murder.” HW 785. This is all, of course, very similar to the artistic metaphysics presented by the Dionysian and the Apollinian in *Der Geburt der Tragödie*.

<sup>195</sup> “to disgust at existence.... Hellenic genius had yet another answer .... in the entire breadth of Greek history.” HW 785.

The question of the value of existence did not drive Nietzsche's Greek to despair or to the denial of the tumultuous and blindly destructive heart of existence. The first thing that Nietzsche assumes is that the Greek genius „den einmal so furchtbar vorhandenen Trieb gelten ließ und als b e r e c h t i g t erachtete.“<sup>196</sup> Nietzsche finds an example of the way the Greeks justified this destructive drive in a version of Hesiod's *Works and Days* encountered by Pausanias. At the beginning of this version are two Erises, one of which demands war and is the mother of night while the other encourages men to compete with one another for their own improvement. This second Eris benefits humanity as can be seen in the envy that spurs competition. Moderns have found this description of a beneficent Eris spurious due, Nietzsche believes, to their ethical distance from anything truly Hellenic. Nietzsche believes that Aristotle and „das gesammte griechische Alterthum“ agree, however, with this Hesiodic understanding of conflict that „einmal eine Eris als böse bezeichnet, diejenige nämlich, welche die Menschen zum feindseligen Vernichtungskampfe gegen einander führt, und dann wieder eine andre Eris als gute preist, die als Eifersucht Groll Neid die Menschen zur That reizt, aber nicht zur That des Vernichtungs-kampfes, sondern zur That des W e t t k a m f p e s.“<sup>197</sup>

This second Eris is not a denial of the natural drive for destruction at the center of all existence. She is, rather, the productive power of that drive as harnessed by the Greeks through their civilization. Nietzsche argues that the envy produced by this cultured form of conflict is not viewed as a fault by the Greek but „als Wirkung einer

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<sup>196</sup> “accepted the drive that was once so dreadfully present and deemed it *justified*.” HW 785-786.

<sup>197</sup> “the entirety of Greek antiquity.... on the one hand refers to one Eris as evil, the one who leads humans into the hostile, conflict of destruction against one another, and then, on the other hand, they praise as good a different Eris, who as jealousy, resentment and envy provokes humans to activity, but not to the activity of the conflict of destruction, rather to the activity of the *contest*.” HW 786-787.



w o h l t ä t i g e n Gottheit,“ causing him to exclaim, „welche Kluft des ethischen Urtheils zwischen uns und ihm!“ This envy leads to an ambition that burns as a flame, ever brighter the „größer und erhabener aber ein griechischer Mensch ist.“ Such a magnificent human specimen recognizes the jealousy of the gods and is propelled by it to sacrifice to them as well as to the recognition of his own transience. He does not try to compete with the gods.<sup>198</sup>

## CONTEST AND STATE

Nietzsche's Greek does, however, inspire his fellow mortals to compete with him, creating an economy of competition within the contest. This economy continually drives the contestants to greater and greater achievements as each „große Hellene giebt die Fackel des Wettkampfes weiter“ causing „eine neue Größe“ to be inflamed „an jeder großen Tugend“ Nietzsche finds among the Greeks a system of *Bildung* that embraces and utilizes the contest as all gifts „muß sich kämpfend entfalten.“ Nietzsche believes that moderns „vor Nichts eine so große Scheu haben als vor der Entfesselung des sogenannten Ehrgeizes.“<sup>199</sup> The modern person „fürchtet nichts so sehr an einem Künstler als die persönliche Kampfbegrenzung, während der Grieche den Künstler n u r i m p e r s ö n l i c h e n K a m p f e kennt.“ Further, just as the Greek youths were educated within the economy of the contest „so waren wiederum ihre Erzieher unter sich

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<sup>198</sup> “as the operation of a *beneficent* deity ... what a chasm of ethical judgment between us and him!... greater and more sublime a Greek is.” HW 787.

<sup>199</sup> “great Hellene passes the torch of the contest on ... a new grandeur ... at each great virtue.... must develop in through a struggle ... fear nothing more than the unchaining of so-called ambition.” HW 789.

im Wettstreit.<sup>200</sup> As Nietzsche's Greeks did not seek to compete with the gods, their students did not seek to compete with their masters. The teachers, like the Olympians, competed only among themselves. The effectiveness of the contest depends as much on whom it excludes as on whom it includes.

For Nietzsche, these contained, competitive economies served to free the most critical, creative drives while maintaining an ordered and strict system of *Bildung*. Students submitted to the discipline of their masters while enjoying the expression and development of their natural, creative impulses. Though the pupils constantly strove to outshine each other, they were also always subordinate to the glory of the *polis*, the goal towards which they focused all of their endeavors. For this reason, the Greek students were „freier, weil ihre Ziele näher und greifbarer waren“, while the modern person „ist dagegen überall gekreuzt von der Unendlichkeit.“<sup>201</sup> Greek youths were rigorously disciplined to achieve the glory of their *polis*, a rather proximate goal, through their competition with one another. In what seems to be a paradox to the modern mind, Nietzsche argues that the rigorously disciplined Greeks actually enjoyed much more artistic freedom than modern students who have no goals and masters and who, through their academic freedom, achieve, at best, a career like journalism.

The productive and creative form of conflict offered by the Greek contest is, Nietzsche believes, only possible within the structure of the Greek state. If a Greek ever looks beyond the glory of the *polis* in his ambition, if his envy is ever inspired by

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<sup>200</sup> “fears nothing in an artist as much as the personal impulse for conflict, whereas the Greek knows the artist *only in the personal conflict*.” “their educators, in turn, were in rivalry among themselves.” HW 790.

<sup>201</sup> “freer, because their goals were nearer and more graspable ... is, in contrast, hindered everywhere by boundlessness.” HW 790.

anything beyond his peers, then he has surpassed his nature and is soon to be destroyed in a competitive economy for which he is not suited. Nietzsche suggests Miltiades as one who, because of his brilliance at Marathon, sought to rise above his sphere of competition and then fulfilled his lust for destruction in disgraceful revenge and outrageous behavior. Nietzsche describes how „[n]ach der Schlacht bei Marathon hat ihn der Neid der Himmlischen ergriffen. Und dieser göttliche Neid entzündet sich, wenn er den Menschen ohne jeden Wettkämpfer gegnerlos auf einsamer Ruhmeshöhe erblickt. Nur die Götter hat er jetzt neben sich — und deshalb hat er sie gegen sich. Diese aber verleiten ihn zu einer That der Hybris, und unter ihr bricht er zusammen.“<sup>202</sup> The Greeks new well how *hubris* could bring on divine *atē*.

Had they simply extirpated the destructive drive expressed in the contest, Nietzsche argues, the state would have become sick, for „ohne Nied Eifersucht und wettkämpfenden Ehrgeiz der hellenische Staat wie der hellenische Mensch entartet.“ Nietzsche’s drive for destruction has to be expressed. It can either be regulated, or it can be suppressed, only to return with a vengeance. The state then becomes „böse und grausam, er wird rachsüchtig und gottlos, kurz, er wird ‚vorhomerisch‘ — und dann bedarf es nur eines panischen Schreckens, um ihn zum Fall zu bringen und zu zerschmettern.“ Sparta and Athens, like Themistocles and Alcibiades, deliver themselves up to Persia, and „sie verrathen das Hellenische, nachdem sie den edelsten hellenischen Grundgedanken, den Wettkampf, aufgegeben haben.“<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> “After the battle at Marathon the envy of the celestials has seized him. And this divine envy enflames when it catches a glimpse of a person without any competitors, without opponents, on the solitary height of fame. He only has the gods beside him now, and that is why he has them against him. These, however, misguide him into a deed of hubris, and he caves in underneath it.” HW 791-792.

<sup>203</sup> “without envy, jealousy and competitive ambition the Hellenic state degenerates as the Hellenic person.... evil and gruesome, it becomes vindictive and godless, in short, it becomes ‘pre-Homeric,’

Nietzsche's conception of the hubris that oversteps the limits of the contest aides in understanding the bounds of his youthful nationalism. Though Nietzsche believes there is something intrinsically beautiful and powerful in his German Spirit, he does not disparage any other nation in the lectures. He is quite complementary of the French, though he believes that German culture cannot grow from their Latin roots. The only nation he criticizes is the German one. Given his valuation of the contest, Nietzsche certainly would not support the notion of *Deutschland über alles*. Countries require the contest for their health as much as cities or citizens do. Nietzsche's Germany needs other nations, and, in fact, it needs them at their strongest and most beautiful in order to be of the most benefit. „Das ist der Kern der hellenischen Wettkampf-Vorstellung: sie verabscheut die Alleinherrschaft und fürchtet ihre Gefahren, sie begehrt, als S c h u t z m i t t e l gegen das Genie — ein zweites Genie“<sup>204</sup>

The Greek worldview Nietzsche depicts, so foreign and obscure to moderns, one which embraces and harnesses the natural drive for destruction within competitive economies, allowed for the great health and beauty of the Greeks. Nietzsche insists that a society must not, through liberal, egalitarian doctrines, stifle competitive ambition and deny the hierarchical castes that Nietzsche sees as unavoidably natural. If it does, that society will continue to degenerate in its sickness until, as an unnaturally constituted organism, it dies. In such a state, Nietzsche argues, all suffer, including both those who could have been great artists and those who were naturally suited to be kept from cultural

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and then it only takes one panic scare to make it fall and to smash it.... they betray what was Hellenic after they have given up the noblest Hellenic foundational thought, competition.” HW 792.

<sup>204</sup> “That is the core of the Hellenic notion of the contest: it detests autocracy and fears its dangers, it desires as a *means of protection* against the genius – a second genius.” HW 789.

pursuits in a life of banausic labor. Thus, Nietzsche claims in the preface entitled *Der griechische Staat* that out of „der Verzärtelung des neueren Menschen sind die ungeheuren sozialen Nothstände der Gegenwart geboren, nicht aus dem wahren und tiefen Erbarmen mit jenem Elende.“<sup>205</sup> Avoiding the softness he diagnoses in modern man, Nietzsche’s state would be used as the tool that ensures the maintenance of his natural hierarchy as „erst die eiserne Klammer des Staates zwingt die größeren Massen so aneinander, daß jetzt jene chemische Scheidung der Gesellschaft, mit ihrem neuen pyramidalen Aufbau, vor sich gehen muß.“<sup>206</sup>

Plato does not require any conflict or competition to maintain order or inspire greatness in his state. However, a form of the contest is critical to Plato’s enterprise. The final course of study for his rulers, after thirty years of education, is *hē dialektikē*. It is, in fact, within the intellectual attempt to constantly improve upon another’s explication of an idea that Plato’s philosopher-kings will finally ascend to knowledge of the Form of the Good.<sup>207</sup> As the competitive dynamic was such a pervasive trait of Greek institutions, it is quite unlikely that Nietzsche derives his idea of the contest directly from Plato’s dialectic (or at least not from Plato’s dialectic alone). He certainly does, though, recognize the agonistic impulse in Plato’s philosophy as an expression of the more general Greek tendency for the contest.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> “the softening of modern man that the monstrous social states of emergency are born, not out of a true and deep mercy for the wretched.” GS 769.

<sup>206</sup> “it is primarily the iron clamp of the state that forces the greater masses together so that now that chemical separation of society, with its new pyramidal composition, *must* happen.” GS 769.

<sup>207</sup> See *Respublica* ll. 531d-534d.

<sup>208</sup> See GS 776 and, for a later expression of the same thought, GD 69-70.

For Nietzsche, conflict will also lead to the greatest artistic culture. Asking how the Greek state can excuse itself „vor dem Richterstuhle der ewigen Gerechtigkeit“, Nietzsche describes the goal and outcome of all of this conflict: „Stolz und ruhig tritt der Staat vor ihn hin: und an der Hand führt er das herrlich blühende Weib, die griechische Gesellschaft. Für diese Helena führte er jene Kriege — welcher graubärtige Richter dürfte hier verurtheilen?“<sup>209</sup> Just as the Homeric world was born of the dark and horrific womb at the center of existence, now within that Homeric world we see that the continual conflict aims to win the beauty of Hellenic culture.

Nietzsche's modern Germans, of course, do quite the opposite. Rather than seeking to produce *Bildung* by means of a state organized into competitive economies, *Bildung* is pursued within a system that shuns both competition and hierarchy as the means to produce the state. The Greek kept a clear distance from any utilitarian consideration that seeks „die Bildung nur gelten zu lassen, soweit sie ihm direkt nützte und wohl gar die Treibe zu vernichten, die sich nicht sofort zu seinen Absichten verwendbar erwiesen.“ For this reason,

Der tief sinnige Grieche empfand gerade deshalb gegen den Staat jenes für moderne Menschen fast anstößig-starke Gefühl der Bewunderung und Dankbarkeit, weil er erkannte, daß ohne eine solche Noth- und Schutzanstalt auch kein einziger Keim der Kultur sich entwickeln könne, und daß seine ganze unnachahmliche und für alle Zeiten einzige Kultur gerade unter der sorgsam

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<sup>209</sup> “before the tribunal of eternal justice.... Proud and calm the state steps before it, and he leads the gloriously flowering woman, the Greek society by the hand. He carries out those wars for this Helen, which grey-bearded judge may condemn here?” GS 771-772.

und weisen Obhut s e i n e r Noth- und Schutzanstalten so üppig  
emporgewachsen sei.<sup>210</sup>

Moderns would describe *Bildung* as the servant of the state. In addition to describing the relationship between the entities using Helen and the victor who wins her, Nietzsche avails himself of another Homeric image to describe the relationship as that between warrior-companions. Here the state is the „derbe muskulöse zum Kampf gerüstete Kamerad und Weggenosse, der dem bewunderten, edleren und gleichsam überirdischen Freund das Geleit durch rauhe Wirklichkeiten giebt und dafür dessen Dankbarkeit erntet.“<sup>211</sup> Culture is now described as a warrior like Achilles rendering the state as a sort of Patrocles. Both ways of seeing the relationship between culture and state are useful as Helen presents the beauty of culture whose indolence is replaced by the strength-ready-for-action of an Achilles. The state is simultaneously presented as loyally subordinate and well-rewarded for its labors. Nietzsche’s state does not exist for the state, but for culture.

Plato’s *Republic* is similarly not about achieving the republic at all. At least it does not present the state as the end for which justice is the means. The state is the mere means and has, otherwise, no value. Socrates’ ostensible goal in Book II is to simply

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<sup>210</sup> “to accept *Bildung* insofar as it directly profits the state and even to destroy the instincts which did not immediately prove themselves to be useful to its aims.... the profound Greek felt that feeling of admiration and gratitude for the state which is almost offensive for modern people, because he recognized that without such an establishment for emergency and protection no single seed of culture could develop either, and that his entire inimitable and eternally singular culture had grown up so luxuriously precisely under the watchful and wise care of *his* establishment for emergency and protection.” ZB 708-709.

<sup>211</sup> “solid, muscular comrade and companion prepared for battle who gives his admired, noble and celestial friend, as it were, escort and whose gratitude he reaps for it.” ZB 709.

define justice for the individual and not at all to create a state.<sup>212</sup> Later in Book V it is again made clear that the entire investigation, including the theorization of the ideal state, is made only to discover what justice is.<sup>213</sup> Even if the state were ever to be created in reality, it would still merely be the means for achieving justice, which, for Plato, is a condition that allows reason, or the rational, ruling element, to come to a perfect knowledge in order to govern the whole in health. The only value the state would have would be as a phenomenal expression of the Form of Justice and as a means to its attainment.

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<sup>212</sup> *Respublica* II. 368c-369a.

<sup>213</sup> *Respublica* II. 472b-e.



## Chapter 5

### GENIUS AND REDEMPTION

For Nietzsche, the state is only necessary to produce and support a system of true *Bildung*. The necessity of the state, born of the destructive drive manifested in humanity, speaks „ohne den es der Natur nicht gelingen möchte, durch die Gesellschaft zu ihrer Erlösung im Scheine, im Spiegel des Genius, zu kommen.“<sup>214</sup> This is the ultimate goal of Nietzsche’s system of education. He can not accept a Christian redemption and does not grant dignity to human existence through rational arguments as Kant does. Nietzsche is, though, clearly driven by a need to justify existence and offer some form of redemption for it. *Bildung*, the state, war, art, slavery and everything else are only important in achieving Nietzsche’s vision of metaphysical redemption through the birth of Genius.

True to form, Nietzsche employs the image of birth to describe the relationship between *Bildung* and the Genius at the climax of the mystery into which he is initiating his audience. In a passage that runs from his nationalist soil to the mysterious apogee of the Genius, he explains how modernity destroys „die Wurzeln jener aus dem Unbewußtsein des Volkes hervorbrechenden höchsten und edelsten Bildungskräfte, die

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<sup>214</sup> “without which nature would not succeed in coming through society to its redemption in appearance, in the mirror of Genius.” GS 770-771.

im Gebären des Genius und sodann in der richtigen Erziehung und Pflege desselben ihre mütterliche Bestimmung haben.“<sup>215</sup> Here we have that native soil of the German language and of the German Spirit, located in the unconscious of the Germans, out of which the powers of *Bildung* erupt and in which these have their roots. This *Bildung*, matured through the ascent from German literature to the texts of the ancients, gives birth to Genius, the image shifting from flora to fauna.

Nietzsche, blending the argument of Aeschylus' Apollo in the *Eumenides* with Christian dogma, does not believe that *Bildung*, though it is the mother, is the actual source of the child. He explains that the „Bedeutung und die Verpflichtung [...], die die wahre Bildung eines Volkes in Hinsicht auf den Genius hat“ can only be understood with the image of the mother and goes on to say of the Genius, Nietzsche's Redeemer, that „seine eigentliche Entstehung liegt nicht in ihr, er hat gleichsam nur einen metaphysischen Ursprung, eine metaphysische Heimat.“ Still, it is only when Genius „im Mutterschooße der Bildung eines Volkes gereift und genährt“ that it

in die Erscheinung tritt, daß er mitten aus einem Volke hervortaucht, daß er gleichsam das zurückgeworfene Bild, das gesättigte Farbenspiel aller eigenthümlichen Kräfte dieses Volkes darstellt, daß er die höchste Bestimmung eines Volkes in dem gleichnißartigen Wesen eines Individuums und in einem ewigen Werke zu erkennen giebt, sein Volk selbst damit an das Ewige anknüpfend und aus der wechselnden Sphäre des Momentanen erlösend....“<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> “the roots of the highest and noblest powers of culture that erupt out of the unconscious of the nation, which in the birthing of Genius and so then in the correct upbringing and nursing of the same have their maternal appointment.” ZB 699.

<sup>216</sup> “meaning and obligation which true *Bildung* has in regard to Genius ... its actual origin does not lie in her, it only has, as it were, a metaphysical source, a metaphysical home.... is matured and nurtured in the womb of the *Bildung* of a *Volk*.... makes an appearance, that it emerges out of the midst of a people,

Nietzsche's aesthetic redemption, then, consists of Genius presenting an idealized image of the *Volk* through its art. This image presents their Platonic Form, embodying what is most essential about that *Volk*. It presents all of the aspects of the *Volk*, which, appearing aesthetically, justify its existence. Nietzsche believes that this is what the Greeks achieved, and the investigation of the idealized image of their *Volk* has been the course of his studies and professional activities for years.

Two other Platonic passages, which have already been cited, repay a second look. In one, Nietzsche is describing how in the time of Goethe and Schiller Genius began to show itself „gleichsam als ein Keim jener Schwinge, von der Plato in Phaedrus redet und welche die Seele, bei jeder berührung mit dem Schönen, beflügelt und emporträgt — nach dem Reiche der unwandelbaren reinen eingestalteten Urbilder der Dinge.“<sup>217</sup> This makes clear the Platonic lineage of Nietzsche's metaphysics. According to this image, one of the things humanity needs to be redeemed from is *becoming*, i.e., time and change. The *Volk* is redeemed (metaphorically) from “the changing sphere of the moment” and is tied to “that which is eternal,” like the Platonic soul born ever closer to the immutable Absolute.

The other thing this image shows from which humanity is aesthetically redeemed is its individuality. Every step of Nietzsche's process of *Bildung* in the lectures is the duty of the entire German *Volk*. The Genius does not offer an idealized image of any individual, but only of the collective, thereby revealing “the highest purpose” of that

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that it presents, as it were, the reflected image, the saturated play of colors of all of the idiosyncratic powers of this people, that it reveals the highest purpose of a people in the parable-like being of an individual work tying its *Volk* itself thereby to that which is eternal and redeeming from the changing sphere of the moment....” ZB 699-700.

<sup>217</sup> “like the sprouting, so to speak, of that wing of which Plato speaks in the *Phaedrus* and which inspires and bears aloft the soul at each contact with the Beautiful towards the realm of the immutable, pure, form-giving archetypes of things.” ZB 730.

*Volk*, as it did with the Greeks. In another passage, Nietzsche is even more explicit about the Schopenhauerian aspect of this redemption from subjectivity. Discussing the few suited by nature to participate in *Bildung*, Nietzsche explains how their work must be

von den Spuren des Subjekts gereinigt und über das Wechselspiel der Zeiten  
hinausgetragen [...], als lauter Widerspiegelung des ewigen und  
unveränderlichen Wesens der Dinge. Und alle, die an jenem Institute Theil  
haben, sollen auch mit bemüht sein, durch eine solche Reinigung vom Subjekt,  
die Geburt des Genius und die Erzeugung seines Werkes vorzubereiten.<sup>218</sup>

As has been discussed, neither the slaves nor the artists will have any dignity as individuals in Nietzsche's scheme of redemption. Thus, the „eigentliche Ziel des Staates“ and everyone in it is „die olympische Existenz und immer erneuerte Zeugung und Vorbereitung des Genius, dem gegenüber alles Andere nur Werkzeuge, Hülfsmittel und Ermöglicungen sind.“<sup>219</sup> Nietzsche's aspiration, then, is a vision of the redemption of his own *Volk* provided by an appearance of Genius from the dread of subjectivity and transience through their idealized image presented in their art.

The other Platonic image already cited depicts a child who, in contemplating aspects of nature can

gleichsam sich wie in zahllosen auseinandergeworfnen Reflexen und  
Spiegelungen, in einem bunten Strudel wechselnder Erscheinungen  
wiedererkennen; so wird er unbewußt das metaphysische Einssein aller Dinge an

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<sup>218</sup> “purified of the traces of the subject and carried beyond the interplay of time as a pure reflection of the eternal and immutable being of things. And all who participate in this institution shall also be at pains to prepare the birth of Genius and the generation of its work through such a purification of the subject.” ZB 729.

<sup>219</sup> “actual goal of the state ... the Olympian existence and eternally renewed procreation and preparation of Genius, opposed to which everything else is only a tool, aid or facilitator.” GS 775-776.

dem großen Gleichniß der Natur nachempfinden und zugleich an ihrer ewigen Beharrlichkeit und Nothwendigkeit sich selbst beruhigen.<sup>220</sup>

This vision again contains the comfort of an intuition of the eternal in a world of continual generation and corruption. Plato's course of education also leads one to the final apprehension of the eternal, in the Forms, and of their source, the Form of the Good. For Plato this moment can be seen as the end goal of the educational program supported by his state. In it, one finally possesses pure, flawless truth without any mediation. As with Nietzsche, this moment raises one out of the confusion of flux and becoming. For Plato this moment serves the state only inasmuch as philosophers who attain this epistemological clarity are best able to lead the state in justice. Nietzsche, who can accept no other form of redemption for humanity, hopes that this moment will be able to redeem the entire *Volk*.

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<sup>220</sup> "recognize himself in them as in, as it were, innumerable reflections and mirror images cast asunder, in a colorful whirlpool of changing appearances; thus he will unconsciously sympathize with the metaphysical, essential unity of all things in the great parable of nature, and he will simultaneously soothe himself in its eternal persistence and necessity." ZB 716.

## CONCLUSION

Though they have previously gone unnoticed, the resemblances between the educational systems of Plato and Nietzsche and their goals are striking, justifying (hopefully) their comparison. It is in the differences, however, that we can best see the trajectory of Nietzsche's thought on art, knowledge and society. In his later and better known writings, Nietzsche is famously quite critical of Plato, though it has been recognized that Nietzsche has great respect for this adversary, as is necessary in any fruitful competitive economy.<sup>221</sup> Nietzsche produces much philosophical work in setting himself against Plato as a critic. In the lectures, Nietzsche seems to take his Platonic stance to reveal the limitations he finds in Platonism while exploring and exploiting the strengths of Plato's approach. Just as the artist in *Wahrheit und Lüge* abandons the traditional uses of words and concepts to create the art that seduces to further existence, Nietzsche poses in and plays with various stances in order to arrive at his own ideas.

In the lectures Nietzsche speaks as, among other things, a German classicist, a philologist, a Schopenhauerian, a German nationalist, and as a Platonist. It is known that

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<sup>221</sup> See, for example, Helm 18.

Nietzsche was already skeptical of Plato and Schopenhauer by 1872.<sup>222</sup> These lectures and the other writings of the time show Nietzsche's struggle with classicism, historicism and nationalism. Though he does not subscribe entirely to any of them, it would be wrong to suppose that he is entirely opposed to any of them. They are all positions he assumes in order to investigate and experience their strengths and weaknesses.

In the Platonic passages cited in the last section, Nietzsche seems to be struggling with a need to believe in metaphysical redemption. His hyperbolic language and mixture of Platonic, Aeschylean, and Christian motifs in his vision of redemption make clear that he recognizes the illusory nature of his aspirations. This struggle can be understood in view of Nietzsche's thought on Plato. One of Nietzsche's strongest criticisms of Plato is his claim that knowledge is available, that others can know it and, most importantly, that *he* knows it.<sup>223</sup> In fact, Plato makes the search for knowledge the highest moral duty.<sup>224</sup> In his later writings, Nietzsche will argue that it was this dogmatic view of the availability of knowledge and Plato's act of putting it in the hands of the plebs that actually undermined the hierarchy that both Plato and Nietzsche value so much. Thus, as Laurence Lampert argues, Nietzsche "judged Plato's Platonism a cure that contributed to the disorder it was meant to treat."<sup>225</sup>

Nietzsche can not accept such epistemological optimism nor the socially liberalizing effects it has had. As shown, Nietzsche does not believe that the concepts of

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<sup>222</sup> On his criticism of Plato see Brobjer 244. On his intellectual break from Schopenhauer in the late 60s see Porter *Dionysos* 5, Silk and Stern 20, and Crawford *passim*, as her entire study shows the continual development of Nietzsche's philosophy through Lange, Hartmann and Gerber *after reading* Schopenhauer.

<sup>223</sup> See Nehamas 4, 32.

<sup>224</sup> See Lampert 218 and Helm 25.

<sup>225</sup> 217. See also 209, 216-218.

language or any of the sciences consisting of them are able to give an objective view of reality. Nietzsche believes that humans are epistemologically doomed to ignorance about reality. The only bright ray in Nietzsche's view of human knowledge is that the same drive for metaphor that leads humans to the illusion of science can also lead them to art. In *Wahrheit und Lüge* he explains that human ignorance is not necessarily a problem as humans only mind being deceived when it is harmful. The linguistic conventions that sustain human societies are filled with inaccuracies that are readily accepted as long as they serve society and its members.<sup>226</sup>

Unfortunately for humans, many concepts lose their ability to sustain human belief. Soon, Nietzsche will proclaim the death of God—not the death of the *Being*, of course, but of the *Concept*. Crawford shows how the concepts of conscious language, as the second language based on the primal, unconscious, instinctive language, plague humanity with the contradictions of the *Ur-Eine* (her term, chosen from the many options Nietzsche offers, for his metaphor for the world-in-itself). She does find a solution to this in Nietzsche's theory of language: "However, if a third language, which consists in a conscious alteration or reconciliation of conscious language with the unconscious formal aspects of language could arise, as it does in genius, the pain and contradiction of the *Ur-Eine* is abolished in the joyful recognition that appearance is appearance."<sup>227</sup>

As Porter points out, Heidegger calls Nietzsche's philosophy an "inverted Platonism." Porter cites a note of Nietzsche's from 1870-1871 showing how Nietzsche does this by viewing that which is "farther away from the truly existent, the purer, the

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<sup>226</sup> WL 877-878.

<sup>227</sup> 177.



more beautiful, and the better. Life in appearance as goal.’”<sup>228</sup> Where Plato devalues art as being too far removed from that which truly is, Nietzsche renders the creative work of art the most accessible and immediate to humans and renders the thing-in-itself the least accessible and most fantastic concept of all. As Porter puts it, Nietzsche shows that “the remoter reaches of Platonic reality just are an appearance posing as a nonappearance.”<sup>229</sup> It is as metaphorical and removed from reality as any other concept of language, regardless of how rigorously and complexly it may be explained and sustained by a structure of other concepts bound together by grammar and logic.

Plato’s realm of being is more insidious than Homer’s art, however, because it requires one’s allegiance to it as if it were the truth. Plato is more insidious than Homer because *he* demands acceptance of his realm of being as the truth. Thus Nietzsche prefers Homer, “the golden nature,” to Plato, “the great slanderer of life.”<sup>230</sup> They are both offering illusions, but that is what one expects and desires from Homer. Nietzsche’s Greeks, as described in *Der Geburt der Tragödie*, are much more sympathetic to Homer’s honest use of illusion than Plato’s lie about it. In summarizing §9 of that work, Porter writes that “the Greeks knew very well that their gods were a fable, but they acted as though they believed in them just the same.”<sup>231</sup> Appearance, the means to redemption for Nietzsche’s Greeks, is, then, the proffered hope for modern redemption in that book.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *Dionysos* 98.

<sup>229</sup> *Dionysos* 160.

<sup>230</sup> Helm 24-25.

<sup>231</sup> *Dionysos* 43.

<sup>232</sup> See Silk and Stern 66.

In his 1872 lectures on *Bildung*, Nietzsche is offering the Germans a new myth, inhabited by new mythical, Germanic beings like the Genius (descended from Kant through Schopenhauer) and the German Spirit. He calls on the image of unity developed by German classicism to shape an image of the unity and redemption of the German *Volk*. He justifies this use of images from the German imagination in *Nutzen und Nachtheil* where he argues that the value of history does not lie in general propositions, but in its potential „ein bekanntes, vielleicht gewöhnliches Thema, eine Alltags-Melodie geistreich zu umschreiben, zu erheben, zum umfassenden Symbol zu steigern und so in dem Original-Thema eine ganze Welt von Tiefsinn, Macht und Schönheit ahnen zu lassen.“<sup>233</sup> And though Nietzsche is sincere in his hopes that there is power in the myth he is presenting, he is aware that it is, at best, a myth.

What other option does a philosopher utterly lacking in epistemological optimism have? The consoling image he offers, though only an image at best, is all that he has. In offering his myth of aesthetic redemption through the structure and form of Plato's myth of epistemological redemption, Nietzsche reveals the illusion inherent in the *Republic*. Plato's image of unity with the source of all knowledge and being is also only an aesthetic dream, presented through similes of the sun, a cave, and a divide line. At the same time, Nietzsche also inhabits and exasperates the classicist myth of Greek unity until its untenable nature is all too evident. He reveals it to be at least as problematic as the historicist approaches of the professional philologists. His exploration of German nationalism through his German Spirit leaves it similarly incoherent by the time he is done with it.

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<sup>233</sup> “to compose inspired variations on a familiar, perhaps commonplace theme, an everyday melody, to enhance it, to elevate it to a comprehensive symbol, and thus to disclose in the original theme a whole world of profundity, power and beauty.” NN 292 (translations adapted to fit syntax).

This is not to say that Nietzsche does not believe in the ideal of Greek unity, German nationalism, or even the aesthetic redemption of his *Volk*. He believes in them as the Greeks believed in their gods. Through believing in them and exploring them, he will, however, find them all eventually useless even as myths. By the mid-70s, Nietzsche's break with Wagner will accompany, if not abet, his inability to retain any serious belief in Schopenhauer or in nationalism.<sup>234</sup> During the same time period, his comments on the ancients and on the German classicists change from playful posing (appearing to bear approval) are replaced by open criticism.<sup>235</sup> The rhetorical shift to open criticism and silence on these themes likely owes more to his break with Wagner than would the conceptual shift.

Nietzsche's substantial loss of faith in his Germanic mythology of the early 70s does not, however, seem to destroy his hopes for a form of aesthetic redemption. Though he remains a cultural critic and continues to write for a large audience (albeit not large enough for his tastes until after he was able to enjoy it), his thinking moves from the collective and political aspirations seen in the lectures and *Der Geburt der Tragödie* to a much more individualist understanding of many of the same issues explored in the early writings.

In a couple of passages from *Götzen-Dämmerung*, written in his last productive year, one can readily recognize many of the elements found in Nietzsche's early writings, though they are all transferred to the individual. He describes the critical role that *Rausch* [intoxication/ rapture] plays for the artist: „Das Wesentliche am Rausch ist das Gefühl der Kraftsteigerung und Fülle. Aus diesem Gefühle giebt man an die Dinge ab, man

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<sup>234</sup> See Ruehl *passim*, Baeumer 145, 149-152, Taylor 101, and Large 122.

<sup>235</sup> See Emden 384, Siemens 392, 400, and Schlechta 150-151.

z w i n g t sie von uns zu nehmen, man vergewaltigt sie, — man heisst diesen Vorgang  
I d e a l i s i r e n.“ Regarding this idealization, he explains that „[e]in ungeheures  
H e r a u s t r e i b e n der Hauptzüge ist [...] das Entscheidende, so dass die andern  
darüber verschwinden.“ He goes on to describe how one „bereichert in diesem Zustande  
Alles aus seiner eignen Fülle: was man sieht, was man will, man sieht es geschwellt,  
gedrängt, stark, überladen mit Kraft. Der Mensch dieses Zustandes verwandelt die  
Dinge, bis sie seine Macht widerspiegeln, — bis sie Reflexe seiner Vollkommenheit  
sind. Dies Verwandeln-m ü s s e n in's Vollkommene ist — Kunst.“<sup>236</sup>

In the end, it appears, Nietzsche assumed sole responsibility for his illusion of the  
aesthetic redemption of existence.

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<sup>236</sup> “What is essential with *Rausch* is the feeling of heightened force and fullness. Out of this feeling one gives to things, one *compels* them to take from us, one violates them, — one calls this process *idealizing*.... An enormous act of *driving out* the main features is [...] decisive, so that the others thereby disappear.... enriches, in this state, everything out of one's own fullness: what one sees, what one wants, one sees it swelled, packed, strong, overloaded with force. The person in this state transforms things until they mirror his or her power, — until they are reflections of his or her perfection. This *having to* transform into perfection is — art.” 116-117.

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